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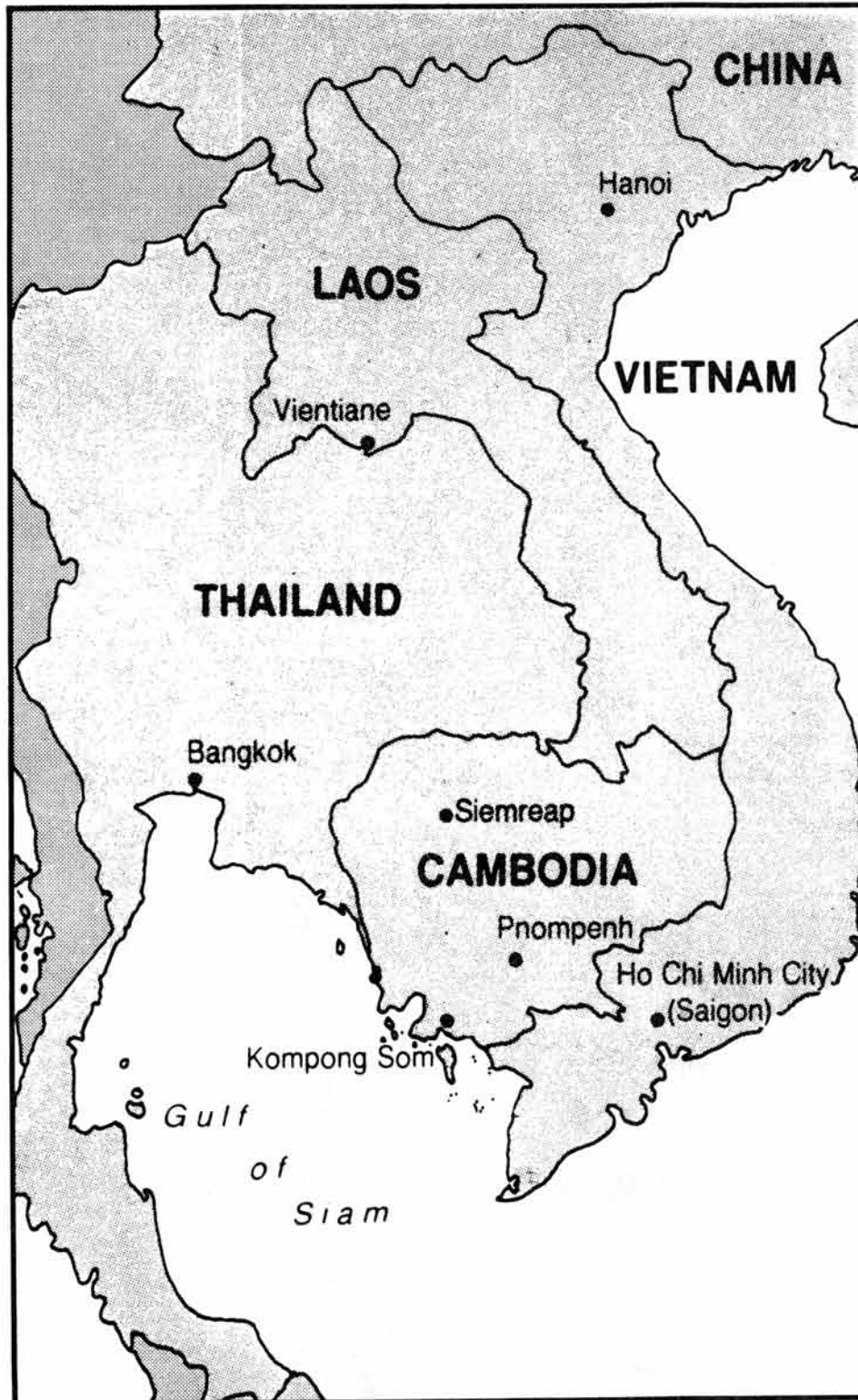
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**Special
Issue:**

INDO- CHINA WARS

*Statement of the
Fourth International:*
**The Sino-
Indochinese Crisis**

*United Secretariat
Minority Resolution:*
**New Advances in
the Indochinese
Revolution and
Imperialism's
Response**

Statement of the Fourth International

The Sino-Indochinese Crisis

I.

1. After carrying on a devastating war in Indochina for many years and creating immense ruin, American imperialism suffered a major defeat in 1975. The failure of the American intervention, brought about by the determined resistance of the Indochinese peoples as well as the rise of antiwar mobilizations and feeling in the United States, reflected the shift taking place in the world relationship of forces to the detriment of imperialism. It helped to accentuate this turn.

The heroic struggle of the Indochinese peoples showed that it was possible to win even against the powerful American army. The deep opposition among the masses to a new war, the social crisis in the United States, as well as the international situation resulting from the imperialist defeat, made it extremely difficult for the American government to resort again to sending large expeditionary forces in to prop up the neocolonial order.

Washington's credibility as the gendarme of the capitalist world was damaged. In these conditions, a crisis of political leadership opened up for the imperialists. The effects of this crisis have made themselves felt in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, in all of southern Africa, in Ethiopia, and most recently in Iran and the Middle East.

In Indochina, the imperialist defeat led to the triumph of a process of permanent revolution throughout the region, in which national liberation and proletarian revolution were combined. This made possible the establishment of new workers states in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In Southeast Asia, and first of all in Thailand, the American defeat promoted the development of liberation struggles and an upsurge of mobilizations of the urban masses and the poor peasants.

The entire system of imperialist domination in eastern Asia that was constructed by Washington in the 1960s and 1970s has been shaken to its foundations.

2. Even before the imperialist defeat, tensions had appeared between the leaderships of the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Chinese Communist parties over political, economic, and diplomatic questions as well as the problem of borders. These tensions gradually developed into military confrontations, and led, four years after the victory, to the entry of regular Vietnamese troops into Kampuchea, as well as to the intervention of the Chinese army in Vietnam. The conflicts arising between bureau-

cratized workers states assumed an unprecedented gravity.

Today, resources that are vitally needed for the social and economic development of the Indochinese countries, which were devastated by the imperialist war, and to meet the fundamental needs of the working masses are being diverted to military ends. The imperialists are pursuing an active counterrevolutionary policy in the region. After some vacillation in the wake of the 1975 defeat, American imperialism has once again stepped up its pressure in eastern Asia. It maintains a strong military presence in South Korea and has beefed up the Park dictatorship's army. It has given massive support to the Thai regime and more generally to the regimes in the ASEAN countries. It has consolidated its air and naval forces and island bases in the Pacific. It maintains "special" ties with Taiwan. It has mounted an economic blockade of Vietnam.

These measures were designed to halt the processes that were set in motion by the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, whose impact on the working masses of eastern Asia was considerable. They were aimed at containing and crushing as rapidly as possible the anti-imperialist national liberation movements.

On the international level, the ideologues of the bourgeoisie have mounted a vast anticommunist campaign focusing on Cambodia and Vietnam. This campaign was begun as soon as it became clear that the Americans were going to be defeated in Indochina.

It is the duty of the international workers movement to mobilize to defend the Indochinese revolutions, which are being threatened by imperialist maneuvers at the same time as they are being weakened by interbureaucratic conflicts. It is also the duty of the international workers movement to do everything possible to end the military confrontations between bureaucratized workers states, clashes for which the workers and peasants are paying a heavy price in blood. This is another tragic illustration of the price humanity must pay for the delay of the world revolution.

II.

3. In face of the imperialist escalation in Indochina, the Chinese and Soviet leaderships should have continued their material aid, limited as it was, to the Indochinese revolution. To the contrary, after the defeat of the imperialists and the weakening

of their capacity for action in Indochina, the Sino-Soviet conflict was to exercise a great weight in the evolution of the situation in the region.

At the root of this conflict—besides the *objectively* different positions in which the USSR and China stand in relation to imperialism—was the determination of the Soviet bureaucracy to maintain its control over the world Communist movement. This is an essential factor for preserving Stalinist monolithism and for applying the Soviet bureaucracy's policy of peaceful coexistence.

The maintenance of this monolithism was seen by the Soviet leadership as an important factor in assuring the stability of its rule within the Soviet Union. To advance its policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism, the Soviet bureaucracy needed to tighten its grip on the strategically key areas so as to avoid uncontrolled developments. Faced with the Chinese revolution, whose victory it was unable to prevent and a leadership over which it could not guarantee its control, it opted for isolating and weakening the Chinese workers state.

In 1960, this orientation led the USSR to cut off its technical aid to China, to inflict very grave blows on its economy, and to withdraw its military aid, despite the imperialist threat Beijing faced. Then, the Kremlin proceeded to station up to a third of its armed forces along the border with China.

In the context of the imperialists' change in attitude toward Beijing, the Chinese bureaucratic caste has affirmed its own national interests in opposition to the Kremlin. Beset by a grave internal crisis, the Chinese bureaucracy is relying on a policy of peaceful coexistence to meet the needs related to its economic choices, to reestablish a status quo in the region, and to limit as much as possible the repercussions of the victory of the Indochinese revolutions.

Hanoi's aim is not to spur the anti-imperialist struggles in the ASEAN countries. However, the orientation of the Vietnamese leadership—which tends toward *de facto* unification of Indochina under its control—as well as the links that this leadership has forged with the Soviet bureaucracy, constitute a factor that could endanger the Chinese leadership's plans for this region, which it considers should form part of its own sphere of influence.

Unable to establish its control over the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), the

Chinese bureaucracy is trying to isolate and weaken the Vietnamese workers state by methods analogous to those that the Soviet bureaucracy used against Beijing—diplomatic isolation, political denunciation, a halt to economic aid, military pressure.

4. Going back before 1975, the Soviet bureaucracy's defense of its own special interests, followed by the same policy on the part of the Chinese bureaucracy, had already forced the Indochinese peoples to pay a heavy price. The 1954 Geneva Accords robbed them of a large part of the victories they won on the battleground against French imperialism. The passivity of the USSR enabled Washington to build up the Diem regime and undertake a new war of aggression. Doling out its aid with an eyedropper, the Kremlin let the American intervention drag on.

As for Beijing, it, like Moscow, opposed the resumption of the armed resistance in South Vietnam in 1960. Beijing made it easier for Moscow to justify its meager aid to Vietnam by refusing to call publicly for forming a real united front in defense of the Indochinese revolutions. It remained unmoved by the pressure for this brought to bear in 1964 by the VCP, the Japanese and other Asian CPs, as well as by the Cuban leadership. The Soviet leadership, for its part, refused to break in fact with the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia, which was brought to power in 1970 by a CIA-fomented coup, because it was apprehensive about Beijing's influence over the Cambodian CP and even over Sihanouk.

Subsequent to the new shifts in the Chinese bureaucracy's international policy that were carried out after the end of the Cultural Revolution, the effects of the combination of peaceful coexistence and the Sino-Soviet conflict made themselves felt more forcefully in Indochina. In July 1971, Nixon was given a public invitation to visit Beijing. In 1972, he met with Mao and then went to Moscow. The isolation of the Indochinese revolution was accentuated at a time when the imperialist military escalation was steadily increasing. Later, the Chinese bureaucracy officially adopted the "theory of three worlds." In the eyes of the Maoist leadership, the USSR became the "main enemy" of China, and therefore—following the logic typical of the bureaucracy—of the peoples of the world.

5. Differences had long ago appeared between the Vietnamese, Soviet, Chinese, and Cambodian leaderships. After the victory of the Indochinese revolutions, these differences were placed in a new context. The clashes between the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Chinese regimes developed within the framework of the Sino-Soviet conflict. This was a result of the relationships maintained by Moscow with Vietnam and China with Cambodia, the ruthlessness with which the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies defend their own

interests, and the specific ways in which their policy of peaceful coexistence fitted in with the counteroffensive of the imperialists in the region, who had to rely on considerably lesser means of action than they had before their defeat in 1975.

III.

6. Regardless of the weight exercised by the Sino-Soviet conflict in the crisis that is rending the Indochinese peninsula, this crisis cannot be explained simply by inter-bureaucratic duels taking place in a world from which imperialism is absent. Washington is no passive spectator to the events that are unfolding. It has not failed to see the opportunities for it offered by the worsening of the Sino-Soviet conflict in Asia as well as by the Chinese bureaucracy's policy of peaceful coexistence.

7. A century of colonial and neocolonial rule and almost forty years of war have drained the countries of Indochina. The ecology of the area was profoundly dis-

rupted by the American military escalation. The economic infrastructure has been systematically destroyed. The draft animals essential to agriculture have been decimated. The irrigation network has suffered considerable damage. The human and social cost of this imperialist war is immeasurable. About 600,000 persons are estimated to have died in Cambodia during the five years of American intervention. About 50 percent of the total population of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia was forcibly uprooted.

The situation that prevailed at the liberation of South Vietnam is an indication. More than 16 percent of the population had been killed or crippled; 56 percent had been left homeless. There were 3.5 million unemployed, with 4.5 million dependents. This gives an idea of the tragic scope of the economic and social problems that faced the Indochinese revolutions in the aftermath of victory. Such a situation could not fail to give rise to social and

Special Issue

In this special issue on the conflicts in Indochina we are printing the texts of two resolutions discussed by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International at its meeting of March 31-April 4, 1979.

The resolution adopted by the United Secretariat appears on the facing page. A minority resolution begins on p. 548.

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political tensions within the various countries and on the regional level.

This state of affairs, however, was not simply the objective consequence of the imperialist war. It was also the result of a conscious policy. The American imperialists maximized the destruction and slaughter in order to weaken in advance the regimes that were going to come out of the victory of the revolutions that they were failing to crush. After the collapse of their forces in 1975, they continued this policy of strangulation. They set up an economic blockade of the countries of Indochina. They rejected all diplomatic overtures, even though Hanoi dropped all preconditions for normalizing relations with the United States. They stepped up their pressure on Laos through Thailand, helping the Thai generals organize Meo, Lao, and Khmer counterrevolutionary groups.

8. The bogging down of its forces in Indochina and the rise of the antiwar movement in the United States forced Washington to recognize the People's Republic of China and profoundly revise its Asian strategy of "containment and roll back." It laid out a new orientation that took full account of the Chinese bureaucracy's desire to conduct a policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism. This policy began to be applied with the Kissinger and Nixon visits in 1971 and 1972. This radical change in the orientation of American policy in Asia—which made possible the turn in Chinese foreign policy—has been expressed most recently in the signing of treaties between China and the United States, and China and Japan that included the "antihegemony" clause demanded by Beijing.

American imperialism is not ready to pay the price for its alliance with Beijing of abandoning its policy of peaceful coexistence with Moscow. Peaceful coexistence with the Soviet bureaucracy remains essential in order to maintain insofar as possible the status quo in such important regions as Western Europe, the Mideast, and Latin America. Although the USSR today does not wield decisive weight in eastern Asia, it has shown its good will, for example, by giving assurances to the Thai regime. Washington also accords great political importance to signing strategic arms agreements with the Soviet bureaucracy.

However, the American imperialists are counting primarily on the Chinese bureaucracy to help them shore up the stability of neocolonial rule in eastern Asia, an important region for them both economically and strategically. They need Beijing's agreement to prepare the way for gaining international recognition of the "two Koreas" and thus freezing the situation on that peninsula; to create a climate favorable to the further rearmament of Japan—which is desired by both the Japanese and American bourgeoisies—to reconsolidate their military forces in the Pacific; to keep

their ties with Taiwan from interfering with Sino-American relations; to reassure the ASEAN regimes; to try to close the breach open since 1973 in Thailand; and to weaken and isolate the Indochinese revolutions.

The economic attractiveness of the market opened up by the Deng Xiaoping leadership's orientation for developing China is not sufficient in and of itself to explain the "Chinese option" Washington has taken in its Asian policy. This is all the more evident since the experience of trade agreements in the past between the imperialist powers and the bureaucratized workers states shows the gap between the promises of contracts and their actual fulfillment. It is apt to be revealed all too quickly how relatively modest China's means are for paying. Washington has taken this option primarily out of strategic considerations. For its own political reasons, the Chinese bureaucracy is making deals today with Washington and Tokyo aiming to establish a new status quo in eastern Asia.

9. The American government's policy was shown clearly at the time of the Chinese intervention in Vietnam, which must certainly have been discussed during Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States in January 1979. Indeed, the attitude that Washington took on the occasion of this intervention contrasted sharply with the one it took in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime by the Vietnamese army and the FUNKSN (Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation), or the stance it took in January 1978 when the Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict came out into the open.

The American government did not launch a violent anti-Chinese campaign on the order of the one it had unleashed previously against Vietnam. Instead, it issued belated and timid diplomatic statements calling simply for the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam and for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from

Cambodia. It did not cancel the scheduled visit to Beijing by its secretary of commerce and in fact concluded new economic agreements with the Chinese. While the battle was raging, it raised the status of its diplomatic mission in Beijing to that of an embassy.

10. American imperialism is trying to exploit the consequences of the Sino-Soviet conflict in Asia to the fullest in order to strike blows against the Indochinese revolution. It is well aware of the economic, social, and political problems assailing Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It is trying to aggravate these difficulties so as to choke off the revolutionary processes in the area that were given impetus by its defeat, and to tarnish in the eyes of the masses of Southeast Asia the example given by the struggle of the peoples of Indochina. Imperialism is reacting today to the victory of the Indochinese revolutions in the same way as it has done in the past to all revolutionary victories. It is doing everything it can to make stabilizing the new regimes more difficult. This includes promoting every possible factor of crisis and stepping up counterrevolutionary pressures.

IV.

11. The imperialists are determined to strike back at the liberation struggles of the peoples of Indochina because they saw very early what was really at stake in the process of permanent revolution going on throughout the peninsula. Since the 1940s, the American intervention has been motivated by the following international objectives: 1. To break the momentum of the Asian revolution in Vietnam, where the social mobilizations have been the biggest. 2. To lay the basis in this way for a new offensive against the Chinese revolution. 3. To assure the general conditions for maintaining imperialist order in eastern Asia. It was for these same three objectives that the Kennedy administration decided in the 1960s to begin the murderous escala-



Deng and Carter at White House, January 31.

tion of the Second Indochina war. This was part of a vast imperialist offensive unleashed against the advances of the colonial revolution in the aftermath of the victory of the Cuban revolution. The blows of this counterattack fell on Santo Domingo, Brazil, Indonesia, and the Congo, among other countries.

12. It is considerations of the same sort, in a different international context, that have dictated the policy the imperialists have followed since 1975. The stakes involved in the struggles begun on the Indochinese peninsula were in fact confirmed after the April 1975 victory, which opened the way for the establishment of a workers state in South Vietnam and marked the beginning of a rapid process of unification between the North and South of the country. In southern Vietnam, the bourgeois state disintegrated with the collapse of the Saigon army, which was its backbone. Far from trying to repair and make use of this neocolonial state apparatus, the Vietnamese Communist Party dismantled what remained of it. It immediately banned all the bourgeois political formations and placed the bulk of the military officers and high functionaries of Thieu's army and administration under detention.

In fact, the political and administrative leadership of Vietnam as a whole became one. The North Vietnamese army was fused with the liberation army in the South. A new administrative structure was set up under the direction of the VCP in the form of provisional military administration committees, and then of civilian people's committees. A general administrative reorganization was studied, and the entire country was divided into thirty-five new provinces in February 1976. On this basis, elections for the National Assembly were held on April 25, 1976. The official founding of the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed on July 2, 1976.

The economic measures taken in the aftermath of the victory followed the same lines as the administrative, political, and military ones. The state rapidly extended its control over the bulk of the industrial enterprises (whose owners had very often fled), the big plantations, and the imperialist holdings. A state trading network was slowly built up, following the immediate establishment of a state monopoly of foreign trade. The banking system was nationalized. In September 1975, the first measures were taken to bring the monetary systems in the North and South into line.

In southern Vietnam, the old currency was immediately withdrawn from circulation and replaced by a new dong whose value was set at parity with that of the North. Private fortunes, notably, were brought under the control of the national bank. Priority was given to reviving the agricultural economy, where the agrarian reform was extended. The nationalization

measures were carefully kept within limits designed not to upset the small peasant proprietors in the Mekong delta. However, as a result of the nationalization of the plantations and the setting up of "new economic zones," the collectivized and state sector of agriculture was rapidly strengthened. The need for moving ahead to large-scale socialist agricultural production was systematically stressed.

Study was quickly begun on a single, central plan for developing the country, dealing with the major branches of industry and based on these first nationalizations and extensions of the state sector. This resulted in the birth of the 1976-1980 five-year plan, which was adopted at the Fourth Congress of the VCP in December 1976 and put into application in 1977. However, the systematic sabotage of the Sino-Vietnamese commercial bourgeoisie blocked the implementation of the measures decided upon by the state in the field of distribution. This had negative repercussions on the rate of collectivization in agriculture as well as on the functioning of the plans in the nationalized industrial sector. This trading bourgeoisie, centered notably in the Cholon district of Saigon, succeeded in limiting the effects of the successive monetary measures taken by the regime by dispersing their holdings and producing counterfeit money.

In face of this resistance and these undermining operations, and after three years of growing social and political conflicts, the state decided to nationalize all that remained of the capitalist trading sector and took decisive steps to unify the monetary system.

The process of reunifying the country was able to get under way immediately after the victory thanks to the measures that were taken to destroy the bourgeois state. It was already incipient in the organization of the liberated areas and of the resistance before April 1975.

13. In view of the region-wide impact of the American defeat, the imperialists looked with disquiet on the reunification of Vietnam, which was now a country of more than 50 million inhabitants with a large and well trained army. It was also disturbed by the policy the Vietnamese leadership was following in Indochina, which was illustrated by the signing in July 1977 of the "treaty of friendship and cooperation" between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which was officially founded on December 2, 1975.

The situation in Thailand provided another source of worry. The fragility of bourgeois rule in that country was shown by the fall of the dictatorship of Generals Thanom and Prapass in October 1973; the opening of a semidemocratic period lasting three years during which there was a considerable growth of social and political struggles both in the countryside and the cities; and by a qualitative growth in this

period and continuing after the bloody October 1976 coup of the guerrilla forces led by the Thai Communist Party, which is now allied with the Socialist Party.

Incapable of resorting again to direct counterrevolutionary military intervention, Washington was no less determined to pursue a policy of "destabilizing" the Indochinese regimes, exploiting the Vietnam-Kampuchea and Vietnam-China conflicts for this purpose. Overall, the imperialist powers followed an orientation close to that of the American government toward the Vietnamese regime.

14. Hanoi has been led by these imperialist pressures, the growing crisis in its relations with Beijing, the economic situation it inherited from the war, and by the additional difficulties brought on by natural calamities to turn more and more exclusively to the USSR and its allies for international support and for economic, technical, and military aid. Vietnam's objective dependence on Moscow has increased. In June 1978 Vietnam became a member of Comecon, and in November it signed a treaty of "friendship and cooperation" with the Soviet Union.

Both Washington and Beijing, each for its own reasons, therefore, had to step up their pressure on Vietnam.

V.

15. The evolution of the situation in Kampuchea after the seizure of power by the Kampuchean Communist Party (KCP) and after the Pol Pot regime adopted the orientation that it did was to add a specific factor of crisis in Indochina.

The revival of mass struggles did not occur in Cambodia until after 1967. This lag did not prevent the main lines of the social process at work in Vietnam and Laos from showing up in Cambodia as well.

In 1963, the KCP leaders began to prepare new guerrilla bases. In 1967, a peasant revolt broke out in the province of Battambang. This provided a new social base for the struggle undertaken by the KCP. The repression sharpened. It was in this context that the Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces began to grow.

The 1970 coup—which marked both the failure of Sihanoukism and the determination of the U.S. government to stop at nothing to isolate the forces of the National Liberation Front (NLF) in South Vietnam—along with the entry of U.S. and Saigon troops into the country threw the neocolonial society in Cambodia into crisis. These factors enabled the FUNK (National United Front of Kampuchea), aided by the VCP and the NLF, to expand rapidly. Within the FUNK the KCP extended its influence and won effective leadership, isolating those elements loyal to Prince Sihanouk, who took refuge in Beijing.

On the ground, the peasant struggles assumed a more radical character, and

mobilizations against the Lon Nol regime erupted in the cities as well. Alongside the industrial plantations and the large and middle-sized estates, small peasant holdings have been very important in Cambodia. In the areas liberated by the FUNK, usury and the power of the old exploitive administration were broken. Cooperatives sprung up and a radical campaign of collective labor was undertaken.

16. Based on the momentum of the social mobilizations that had impelled the liberation struggle for years, the victory of the FUNK forces in April 1975 opened the way for the establishment of a workers state in Kampuchea. The Lon Nol army collapsed. The political and administrative structures of the bourgeois state were systematically broken up. Sihanouk was put under house arrest. An extensive repression was launched against the administrative and military personnel of the old regime.

Once in power, the KCP leadership abruptly decreed a series of anticapitalist measures. Industry and the plantations were nationalized. Private property was abolished to an unprecedented extent. An authoritarian course was set to collectivize all economic and social life in the countryside very rapidly. Commercial and monetary operations were almost completely eliminated. The ties of dependency to imperialism were broken, all foreign investments were seized. For a time, the country shut itself off entirely from the outside world, with the exception of the relations it had with China. International trading operations were resumed only very gradually, hesitantly, and under strict governmental controls. The same is true of diplomatic relations.

The economic, social, state, and political bases of capitalism and imperialist domination were destroyed. In the areas of Thailand close to Cambodia, the new state forged ties with the Thai national liberation movement led politically by the Thai Communist Party.

17. The regime was not content with carrying out an unusually brutal repression against the bourgeois forces. Its decrees culminated in the deportation of the majority of the working masses. The population of the capital was totally evacuated in a few days. The same thing happened in other urban centers and in newly liberated villages. The scope, rapidity, and the authoritarian form of these measures cannot be explained simply by immediate pressing needs (the threat of famine after the ending of the U.S. food airlift, on which the areas controlled by the Lon Nol government had become completely dependent after 1970; the overconcentration of refugees in Phnompenh; and the lack, due to the war damage, of a transportation system capable of moving food quickly). These decisions consolidated the KCP's bureaucratic power, destroying the capacity for collective action of the masses who had

suffered severely in the preceding five years. This combination of anticapitalist measures and terrorist methods by the government against the masses is reminiscent of the period of forced collectivization in the USSR under Stalin, which resulted in millions of deaths. It also recalls the measures taken against the Baltic peoples in 1939-40.

18. The establishment of a new workers state—with extreme bureaucratic deformations—in Kampuchea can only be understood in the context of the victory of a region-wide process of permanent revolution, in which the historic driving force



Inhabitants greet Khmer Rouge troops in Phnompenh.

was the Vietnamese revolution. In Cambodia, although an agrarian crisis emerged in the 1960s, it was still limited in scope. The degree of industrialization in the country was particularly low. The urban and rural proletariat, the agrarian semi-proletariat, and the landless peasantry were relatively small and dispersed social layers. Thus, the tempo of the Cambodian revolution was considerably accelerated by the country's integration into a region-wide process of wars and revolutions.

19. The policy of the Pol Pot regime was to have extremely grave consequences both for Kampuchea and for Indochina. Given the prevailing conditions of public health and nutrition, the human cost of the mass deportations was terribly high. Politically and socially atomized, the working masses were plunged into passivity. The government set up a system of forced labor and embarked on a campaign of unbridled nationalism, which rapidly veered toward antiforeignism. It took repressive measures against the Chinese and Vietnamese minorities, which made up a large part of the urban and rural proletariat, as well as of the petty bourgeoisie. The

call for mobilizing against the "foreign danger" was to justify demanding an intense and prolonged exertion by the masses to assure that the needs of production would be met. The autarkic economic orientation of the Pol Pot leadership, which carried the Stalinist policy of "building socialism in one country" to the point of absurdity, led to imposing a terrible burden on the working people in an attempt to "overcome the backwardness of the country." The regime came to depend solely on the army and the KCP apparatus.

The Pol Pot-Saloth Sar leadership's nar-

rowly nationalist policy is explained partially by its history. In the early 1960s it gained the leadership of the KCP in opposition to the old "Indochinese" tradition of the Communist movement in Cambodia. Educated in Paris in the 1950s, it drew its own balance sheet of the Geneva Accords, in which the Khmer Communists were denied a voice. Its nationalist orientation was further hardened by the USSR's attitude toward Lon Nol and by a certain number of disagreements with the Vietnamese leadership (over whether it was opportune to resume the armed struggle in 1967 and over the implications for Cambodia of the 1972-73 Paris Accords).

Differences emerged within the KCP and even in its leading team and in the army. A policy of physically purging opposition elements was to decimate all those suspected of pro-Vietnamese sympathies. Centers of opposition were to crop up in several regions in 1978.

The policy of the Pol Pot regime endangered the bases of the workers state in Cambodia. In the long run, it could only favor the reappearance in force of procapitalist and proimperialist opposition groups linked to the Thai dictatorship. The expe-

rience of past forced collectivizations in agriculture have shown how short lived the "positive" results in production are and what kind of a price the workers have to pay for such policies in the medium and long run. For the moment the regime had the advantage that the counterrevolutionary forces were weak, having fallen apart after their 1975 defeat. But the methods of terror used against the masses provided a fertile ground for relaunching counterrevolutionary movements, especially if an opposition ready to defend the social gains of the revolution did not move first.

VI.

20. The Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict was never essentially over border disputes. As early as 1975, it clearly took the form of a political conflict concentrating all the elements of crisis that were brewing in the region in the aftermath of the victory. The policy of the Cambodian bureaucracy tended to deny the objective interests linking the struggles of the three Indochinese people after the victory, interests that had already been demonstrated in their common fight for liberation. It offered an opening for the maneuvers of the imperialists, who were seeking to exploit the tensions among the different Indochinese states. This became evident when Thailand organized a brief blockade of Laos. The Cambodian regime's policy blocked the mechanisms that the Vietnamese government wanted to set up on an all-Indochina level to deal with economic, diplomatic, political, and military matters. Finally, Kampuchea became an important element in the Sino-Vietnamese conflict and therefore in the Sino-Soviet one.

21. Beijing sent increasing aid to Pnompnh, regardless of the different interests and positions dividing the Deng Xiaoping and Pol Pot leaderships. Cambodia became very largely dependent on Chinese financial, diplomatic, and technical aid. The Cambodian army was strengthened through an influx of a very large number of Chinese military advisers. Its arsenal was improved to the point of including a substantial amount of long-range artillery and MIG 19s. The Khmer-Chinese alliance was consummated with the triumphal visit of Pol Pot to Beijing in September 1977, while violent military incidents were breaking out along the Vietnamese border. In 1978, the People's Republic of China continued to beef up Cambodian military potential, while helping to prepare guerrilla bases in the country in case the Pol Pot regime was overthrown.

With its relations with China becoming more antagonistic, Hanoi faced a not inconsiderable military problem. An armed force of about 70,000 men—supplied and trained by China—had been built up on its flank. Although this force was not sufficient to challenge Hanoi's military power, it posed serious problems in a whole region of Vietnam.

In the fall of 1977, Sino-Vietnamese relations took a major new turn for the worse. The growing clashes on the Khmer-Vietnamese border were a clear symptom of this. They foreshadowed the events of 1978. In the course of 1977, the Vietnamese leadership decided to settle accounts with the Pol Pot regime. To accomplish this, it sent its regular army into Kampuchea in December. In 1978, Beijing seized the nationalization of private commerce, the weight of which fell largely on bourgeois layers of Chinese origin in Saigon-Cholon, as a pretext to launch a vast campaign of political denunciations of the Vietnamese regime. It also officially announced the cessation of economic aid to Vietnam, although in practice it had been halted for months. In 1978, the flight of 160,000 Hoas (Vietnamese of Chinese origin) into China also gave rise to grave tensions along the border. In that year also, the Sino-Japanese treaty was signed and the Sino-American treaty was on its way toward being signed.

22. It was in this context that Hanoi launched a vast offensive into Cambodia in December 1978-January 1979, in which elements of the FUNKSN were incorporated. The Vietnamese army, which included 100,000 troops and some of the best divisions in the regular armed forces, captured Pnompnh within a few weeks and subsequently occupied key positions throughout the country. The Khmer Rouge forces then began guerrilla operations.

Since the onset of the border clashes, revolutionary Marxists have clearly opposed a policy that could lead to a military occupation of Cambodia by regular Vietnamese armed forces and the replacement of the Pol Pot leadership by a team totally dependent on the presence of Hanoi's troops. They condemned the Vietnamese intervention.

It would have been a different thing to give material and political support to the development of an opposition to the Pol Pot regime, an opposition that while defending the fundamental gains of the Cambodian revolution would have undertaken to abolish the terror measures of the Pol Pot government. These measures were already gravely endangering some of the gains for which the Cambodian people paid a high price in their struggle for liberation. They threatened, moreover, to smooth the way for future counterrevolutionary operations. No one could remain indifferent to the extreme gravity of the policy being followed by Pnompnh and to the suffering it was inflicting on the Khmer people and on the national minorities.

But to overthrow the Pol Pot regime by means of the power of the Vietnamese regular army was inadmissible. Yet this is exactly what happened. Centers of opposition did, indeed, appear in several regions of Cambodia in 1978, but they remained very weak. The FUNKSN was formed only

shortly before the Vietnamese intervention. Given the scope of the purges that had taken place in the ranks of the KCP and the army and the political passivity of the population, the FUNKSN would have needed time to grow. It would have needed time to expand its popular base and demonstrate its capacity to overthrow the Pol Pot regime, relying essentially on its own strength. It was only thus that a Cambodian opposition could have established an autonomous decision-making power as well as concrete political independence vis-à-vis the Vietnamese bureaucracy.

The Vietnamese intervention ran counter to such a development, as did the policy of the Vietnamese government before the complete breakoff of ties with Pnompnh in December 1977. In fact, while today Hanoi is denouncing the "crimes of Pol Pot," at that time it kept silent about the tragedy being experienced by the Cambodian people. Indeed, for a long time it officially praised the successes of the Pol Pot regime. By combining this political silence and military intervention, Hanoi is playing the game of those forces that want to exploit national feeling in the attempt to restore capitalist and imperialist domination in Cambodia.

23. The assessment made above is not simply a moral one but a political judgment on a question whose importance was understood by Lenin in his time. In his report on the party program, which was presented on March 19, 1919, to the Eighth Congress of the Russian CP, he rejected the accusation that the Bolsheviks were tempted to use their army to help overthrow the bourgeoisie in the countries neighboring Russia. It was on the basis of the national question that he rejected such a perspective:

The demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is proceeding in different countries in their own specific ways. Here we must act with utmost caution. We must be particularly cautious with regard to the various nations, for there is nothing worse than lack of confidence on the part of a nation. . . . No decree has yet been issued stating that all countries must live according to the Bolshevik revolutionary calendar; and even if it were issued, it would not be observed. . . . We cannot help reckoning with the fact that things there [in Poland] are proceeding in rather a peculiar way, and we cannot say: "Down with the right of nations to self-determination! We grant the right of self-determination only to the working people." . . . We must decree nothing from Moscow. [*Collected Works*, vol. 29, pp. 174-75.]

What was true for a bourgeois state shaken by the rise of class struggle is still more true in the case of a workers state. The Vietnamese bureaucracy wanted to force the struggle in Cambodia to follow Hanoi's calendar. This will poison relations between Vietnamese and Khmers, since it is all too obvious that the new regime in Pnompnh is dependent on the support it gets from Hanoi.

In a general sense, the Vietnamese inter-

vention in Cambodia has once again sharply posed the question of an Indochinese Socialist Federation. The unity of the Indochinese revolution is a necessity from the standpoint of the objective interests of the masses. It is indispensable for defending and extending the gains of the Vietnamese revolution in the face of imperialist pressure. But to be genuine, such unity must be freely accepted by all the peoples concerned. Real freedom to exercise the right of self-determination must be guaranteed, as well as lasting respect for the rights of the minority peoples. The latter must enjoy equal rights in fact with the majority population. Without such guarantees, the unification of Indochina, even if it takes the form of agreements among formally independent states, will in the long run only work in favor of the strongest state, or rather its bureaucracy—that is, in favor of Vietnam. Only the establishment of a real Federation of United Socialist States of Indochina, fully guaranteeing the right of self-determination, can make possible the achievement of these objectives.

The question of the means a leadership adopts to assure respect for the rights of minorities in fact is not a matter of secondary importance. It was not by chance that Lenin made several points on this question in his last writings, after assessing the ravages wrought by Great Russian chauvinism in Georgia.

He stressed the distinction that had to be made not only between the "nationalism of the oppressor nation and that of the oppressed nation," but also more generally between the "nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation."

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. . . .

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or "great nations," as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations, but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. . . . That is why, in this case, the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity . . . requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question. . . . [Lenin's Last Letters and Articles, pp. 19-21]

It is important to recall these lines now. Because the Vietnamese government is claiming that the equality of the Indochinese nations is guaranteed by treaties that link these nations together formally on the basis of their being totally independent states but which in fact set the seal on a tight integration of Laos, the "new" Kampuchea, and Vietnam under Hanoi's control. The Vietnamese leadership is also mounting a huge propaganda campaign to exalt the "four thousand year history" of the "great" Vietnamese nation. Moreover,

the precolonial and colonial history of these countries, as well as the central role of the struggle for national liberation in the Indochinese revolutions, have provided fertile ground for the exacerbation of these nationalisms.

The Vietnamese intervention is tending to reinforce the power of the Vietnamese bureaucracy in Vietnam itself, as well as in Indochina as a whole. It is helping to accentuate the nationalist tendencies and increase the weight of the military elements in the society. It is illusory to hope



that the Vietnamese leadership—which in its own country defends a bureaucratic monopoly of information and political decision making and, in rapport with the Soviet bureaucracy, sets its international orientation within the framework of peaceful coexistence—can either stimulate the masses to mobilize to take power directly or establish relations of equality among the peoples and states of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Today, no solution favorable to the fundamental interests of the Cambodian workers and peasants is possible in a context dominated by the presence within the country of Vietnamese armed forces.

It is necessary to help the Cambodia working people to build councils and mass organizations, to give them food and technical aid, to ensure the arming of the masses. This is necessary to avert a situation in which the indispensable withdrawal of Vietnamese troops could be exploited by the capitalist and imperialist forces, and in order to enable the peoples to defend themselves against any reprisals by the Pol Pot forces. Such an orientation is simply the continuation, in the present situation, of the correct policy for the previous period which consisted of helping

the masses and relying on them and their organizations to fight the Pol Pot regime.

The Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea has not removed the threat that China posed on the country's northern border. There, the fact that Hanoi did not limit itself to responding to the attacks of Khmer units but overthrew the Pol Pot regime has enabled the Chinese bureaucracy, as well as American imperialism, to launch a new campaign of denunciations against Vietnam. This campaign, in turn, facilitated the Chinese intervention in February 1979.

VII.

24. The Chinese government used Hanoi's military initiative in Cambodia as a pretext for attacking Vietnam. However, this intervention, as we saw, fits into a broader context that gives it its real meaning and portent. It is a stark illustration of the counterrevolutionary course on which the Chinese bureaucracy has set out in eastern Asia and must be denounced as such.

Beijing has maintained the fiction that this intervention was "limited retaliation" in response to increasing incidents on the Sino-Vietnamese border. But in its scope, the extent of the troops and matériel brought into action, its duration, and the nature of the targets (including a number of urban centers), the Chinese intervention was a real act of war.

The Chinese leadership, moreover, has not concealed certain aspects of its counterrevolutionary orientation. It has reproached the imperialist powers for exhibiting weakness toward "social imperialism" in Africa and the Mideast. It has declared its determination to show greater "firmness" in Southeast Asia, a strategic area owing to the straits linking the Pacific to the Indian ocean. Calling Hanoi an "Asian Cuba," the Chinese leadership has more clearly than ever avowed its determination to weaken the Vietnamese state by every means, including military ones, and to force it to loosen its ties with Moscow.

The considerable importance accorded to this objective today by the Chinese leadership has been confirmed by its decision to intervene in the way it has in Vietnam. Because the Chinese bureaucracy had to pay a not inconsiderable price in order to do this. It gave Vietnam an opportunity to regain the diplomatic initiative with respect to a number of semicolonial countries, most of which disapproved of Hanoi's intervention in Cambodia. And Beijing did this precisely at a time when its own prestige in the eyes of the national liberation movements had become tarnished. It apparently had to face opposition within the Chinese population, and even within the party and state apparatus. Finally, the operation itself was probably very costly economically in men as well as in matériel.

25. The intervention in Vietnam seems to have produced only very limited immediate results. Hanoi was not forced to throw the bulk of its regular forces into the front lines to contain the thrust by the Chinese troops; nor did it have to call back many of the divisions operating in Cambodia. Beijing can only expect to draw medium-term benefits from such initiatives. But it is well aware of the economic and social price that the Vietnamese regime is going to have to pay to maintain its defenses under conditions of constant military pressure.

The Soviet leadership has made very clear, both through Brezhnev's speech and through its actions, that its priority is to continue its policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism, that it is not prepared to put its international orientation in question by getting too deeply involved on the side of Vietnam, and that it is following the same course in its relations with the Chinese bureaucracy.

Beijing, therefore, is free to pursue its campaign of attrition against the Vietnamese regime, on the sole condition that it does not go "too far." We have to expect that the Chinese leadership will continue and sharpen its policy aimed at weakening the Vietnamese regime.

VIII.

26. The bourgeois propagandists are on a rampage. They are taking advantage of this occasion to try to make people forget a century of imperialist wars that have cost humanity many tens of millions dead. It would have people believe both that the USSR and its allies may launch an offensive against the imperialist powers and that there is a danger that a third world war may result from the conflicts among the bureaucratized workers states. The primary objective of this campaign is clear. It is to create a climate of opinion among the working masses, above all in the United States, more favorable for justifying the intervention of American armed forces against a new breakthrough of the world revolution. We must systematically expose this propaganda campaign, which conceals an attempt by the imperialists to resume their direct counterrevolutionary activities after the defeat they suffered in Indochina. We must expose the constant danger of world war posed by imperialism.

We must also explain the foundations of the counterrevolutionary policy of the bureaucracy in power in the workers states, whose crimes make the job of the imperialist propagandists easier.

27. The bureaucracies' claim that they can "build socialism" in "their" respective countries and their defense of their own interests as parasitic castes involve a policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism and the liquidation of any proletarian internationalist perspective. This is what led the Soviet bureaucracy to trans-



Vietnamese infantry moves toward Chinese positions.

form the Communist International from an instrument of the world revolution into a tool of its own diplomatic interests, before finally abolishing it. A chauvinist messianic mystique, the complement of bureaucratic nationalism, provided the justification for the Stalinist leadership's first purges of those who opposed the establishment of its dictatorship in the USSR and the Communist International. It went on, in the same vein, to excommunicate the leaderships brought to power by revolutions that developed against the Kremlin's will. The Yugoslavs were first, followed by the Chinese. The bloody purges that broke the independence of the Communist International and the subsequent dissolution of this organization were the international concomitant of the rise of bureaucratic power in the USSR itself.

Since Stalin's condemnation of the Yugoslav "schism" in 1948, the conflicts among bureaucratized workers states have taken graver and graver forms. This process continues today, with the stationing of massive numbers of Soviet troops along the Chinese frontier, with Beijing militarily aiding the army of the Pol Pot regime, with the proliferation of incidents on the Vietnamese-Khmer border, with the moving of large numbers of Vietnamese regular army troops into all of Cambodia, and with the Chinese intervention in Vietnam.

The confrontation under way has an extremely dangerous dynamic, and must be halted at all costs. It has been imposed on the Indochinese and Chinese masses, who were led into bloody clashes, to the detriment of their own interests. It is doing great harm to the international workers movement. It is setting precedents that could have tragic consequences on the Sino-Soviet border or in Eastern Europe when the Soviet bureaucracy's domination of the People's Democracies is once again

challenged by the proletariat, or if the Sino-Soviet conflict sharpens.

28. Care should be taken to avoid making any shortsightedly conjunctural or sectoral judgments on these questions. Nothing could be more dangerous than to yield to the temptations of a false political "realism" that would lead sections of the revolution to try to estimate which of the bureaucracies—Soviet or Chinese—is for the moment "less counterrevolutionary," and to divide the world into "two camps," with the USSR, Vietnam, and Cuba on one side; and the United States and China on the other.

The policies of the Chinese and Soviet bureaucracies reflect the same interests and the same objectives. Both seek to ensure the political monolithism and control in "their" spheres of influence. The aim is to assure the maintenance of the monopoly of power that they exercise in their respective countries, which is the source of their social privileges. They also seek to acquire the means for conducting a policy of peaceful coexistence, by ensuring their ability to play a direct role in the maintenance of the international status quo. Beijing's support for Pinochet is matched by Moscow's for Videla.

The Sino-Soviet conflict is not the result of an "economic expansionist drive" analogous to that exhibited by imperialism. It stems from the determination of each of these bureaucracies to ensure the best political conditions domestically and internationally for preserving their social and political monopoly of state power in their own country.

It is the worldwide policies of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies that have to be assessed. Both are counterrevolutionary. It is the bases themselves of the interbureaucratic conflict between China and the USSR that have to be attacked. Along

with exposing the policy of the imperialists, it is necessary to stress the importance of fighting today for political revolution and for establishing governments based on real socialist democracy. Only the political revolution can put an end to the power of the bureaucracy and thus to the conflicts between bureaucratized workers states. In face of the imperialist propaganda, it is necessary to restate that these bureaucratic castes by no means represent socialism. Under real workers and peasants power there will be no more war; nationalism will wane decisively.

IX.

29. The conflicts that have rent Indochina and locked China and Vietnam in confrontation obviously have very grave implications for the masses in Southeast Asia. This is particularly true for Thailand, since this is where the most significant struggle against imperialism in the region is being fought. The victory of the Indochinese revolutions had greatly improved the conditions in which the Thai movement was carrying on its struggle.

But today the Thai resistance has felt the full backlash of the Indochinese crisis and the sharpening of the Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Soviet conflicts in eastern Asia. It is threatened with being isolated politically and cut off from material support. Moscow, Beijing, Hanoi, and just recently Phnompenh have in turn courted the Bangkok regime, seeking to get into its diplomatic good graces. The Chinese leadership declares openly that it sees Kriangsak's Thailand as a new "line of defense" in the region against the danger of "hegemony." The Vietnamese leadership is trying at any price to reassure



Thai strongman Kriangsak.

ASEAN in order to break out of the diplomatic isolation to which it has been subjected. Moscow, likewise, is doing the same.

The Thai resistance, which embraces organizations of different political outlooks, could become a pawn in the Sino-Vietnamese conflict. It may come under pressure to take a position publicly in support of one of the parties to the dispute (which it has refused so far to do). This would only accentuate the divisions in the Thai resistance and paralyze its capacity for action.

The isolation of the Thai struggle would be all the more grave because American imperialism and the Thai bourgeoisie are

going to try to take advantage of the situation to deal severe blows to a movement whose recent successes have worried them. It is the duty of all anti-imperialist activists to actively demonstrate their solidarity with the liberation struggles in Thailand and throughout Southeast Asia and to call for a united front of the workers states in defense of these revolutionary fighters.

Such support for the anti-imperialist struggles in Southeast Asia is an essential task that goes hand in hand with defending the Indochinese revolution. The spread of revolution in Thailand and in the region would deal a decisive blow to the imperialist attempt to stifle the Indochinese workers states. More favorable objective conditions would then exist for overcoming the economic, social, and political problems they are experiencing.

In a more general way, new advances of anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggles, especially in the United States and Japan, would have the same effect.

X.

30. It is also the duty of the international workers movement to mobilize in defense of the Indochinese revolutions, which are being threatened by imperialist maneuvers at a time when they have been weakened by interbureaucratic conflicts. In the medium and long term, the Chinese bureaucracy's policy can only run counter to the interests of defending the Chinese workers state, which could find itself being threatened once again as a result of the reinforcement of the imperialist presence in the region.

Washington is not going to rest content

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Thai army paratroop detachment.

today with just trying to stabilize the neocolonial state in Thailand. It is going to expand its military aid to the Thai army considerably. It is to be feared that it will step up its pressure once again on Laos, using the remains of the counterrevolutionary army of the Meo General Vang Pao and the groups now in Thailand that are linked to the former Laotian regime and to the feudal lordships in the southern part of the country. At the same time, the Chinese influence in the north of the country remains considerable.

The reappearance on the international scene of Prince Sihanouk and the appeals he is launching for convening a new international conference on Indochina may give the United States the opportunity to mount a political and diplomatic offensive on the Cambodian question, in conjunction with an attempt to revive the subversive activity of the rightist Khmer Serai groups. The United States is continuing its policy designed to maintain the economic blockade and diplomatic isolation of the Vietnamese revolution.

The international workers movement must raise a hue and cry against these pressures that the imperialists are bringing to bear on the Indochinese revolutions and prevent them from becoming worse! It must struggle to get the U.S. blockade of Vietnam ended and to force the powers

that bear the responsibility for forty years of devastation and slaughter in the three Indochinese countries to offer them economic aid with no strings attached! It must raise an outcry against the economic blockade of Cambodia, which is threatened with famine! It must demand that the bourgeois governments extend diplomatic recognition to the Indochinese regimes! It must oppose the imperialist propaganda campaign against the Indochinese revolutions and the giving of military support to the Thai dictatorship! It must demand the withdrawal of the American Seventh Fleet from the Pacific and the dismantling of the American bases! In view of the danger of imperialist aggression, which is historically always present, it must call for the formation of a united front of workers states!

31. If a final lesson must be drawn from the recent Indochinese events, in view of the sufferings these peoples continue to endure, it is the urgent need to fight for the revival of real proletarian internationalism and socialist democracy.

The activists of the Fourth International have been engaged in this struggle since their movement was founded in response to the Stalinist degeneration of the first workers state and of the Communist International. In the forty years of history of the workers movement since that time, this

fight has lost none of its immediacy; quite the contrary.

This fight is for building a mass revolutionary International, for world revolution, for a federation of socialist united states of the world.

April 6, 1979

Nota bene: The crisis rocking the Indochinese peninsula cannot be understood without taking account of the whole series of factors analyzed in the resolution adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on April 6, 1979. Unless this is done, it is impossible to take a correct overall position with regard to these conflicts.

The January 1978 and January 1979 statements by the United Secretariat obscured the interlocking between the inter-bureaucratic conflicts and a renewed imperialist offensive, an interlocking that took place in the framework of the policy of peaceful coexistence. They did not sufficiently stress the immediacy of the tasks of defending the Indochinese revolutions against imperialism. The February 1979 statement focusing on the Chinese intervention in Vietnam did not make clear the new political situation existing in Kampuchea and in the region after the entry of the Vietnamese regular army into Kampuchea and the orientation that had then to be assumed by revolutionary Marxists. □

Minority Resolution

Advances in Indochinese Revolution and Imperialism's Response

I. The Class-Struggle Framework of World Politics

The toppling of the Pol Pot regime by rebel Kampuchean forces and Vietnamese troops in December 1978-January 1979, and the February-March 1979 invasion of Vietnam by Chinese troops, put the Indochinese revolution once again in the center of world politics.

The Vietnamese revolution, the weightiest component of the Indochinese revolution, directly involves the destiny of 50 million people. It profoundly affects the fate of more than 300 million people in Southeast Asia, an area of vital shipping lanes and sources of tin, tungsten, oil, and rubber. Beyond that, Vietnam has for many years been a central battleground between imperialism and the world revolution.

The blow the imperialists suffered in 1975 marked a turning point in post-World War II world politics. It exposed the limitations on Washington's capacity to simultaneously maintain a preponderant military position in the world; use its own armed forces against any outbreak of the world revolution; compete effectively with its capitalist rivals; maintain a stable international monetary system; and preserve social peace at home. The defeat of the U.S. imperialists in Indochina, followed by the worldwide capitalist economic recession of 1974-1975, shifted the world relationship of class forces in favor of the working class.

Understanding the repercussions of this shift is essential to understanding the 1978-79 developments in Indochina. The following aspects of the new situation stand out.

The axis of world politics remains the class struggle between the capitalists, principally the imperialists, on the one hand, and the working class and its toiling allies on the other.

Although the imperialists were dealt a body blow in Indochina in 1975, they did not give up and walk away. They sought, under much more unfavorable conditions, to find the best way to assert their interests against the working masses of Indochina and all of Southeast Asia. Their goal remains that of weakening, and ultimately destroying, the workers state in Vietnam.

They intensified their campaign against the Vietnamese revolution in reaction to the final elimination of capitalist property relations in southern Vietnam in 1978, the toppling of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, and the dangers that these developments posed to the maintenance of capitalism elsewhere in Southeast Asia. They

initiated a drive to halt the new advances in the class struggle.

This stepped-up counterrevolutionary drive by the imperialists is the framework for understanding the civil war in Kampuchea and Beijing's invasion of Vietnam.

The weakened condition of American imperialism after 1975 made open military intervention too risky because of the anti-war attitudes of the American workers. Other direct counterrevolutionary measures (diplomatic isolation and economic boycott of Vietnam, military aid to the neighboring capitalist regimes and rightist guerrillas in Laos and Kampuchea) proved insufficient to turn the situation to imperialism's advantage. For this reason they needed Beijing's invasion of Vietnam.

The weakened condition of imperialism has forced the capitalist rulers into a policy of détente with both Moscow and Beijing. Although they have never given up their ultimate aim of destroying the two major workers states and restoring capitalism there, the imperialists have had to modify their immediate objectives. In place of the earlier strategy of containment and rollback, they have sought to reach political agreements with both Moscow and Beijing, based on mutual opposition to revolutionary change and collaboration to halt it. They have also sought to establish significant trading relationships.

The counterrevolutionary betrayals by Moscow and Beijing, which are the essence of these détente relationships, do not represent a change in policy on their part. On the contrary, they are a continuation of the policy of peaceful coexistence, which flows from the Stalinists' opposition—for reasons of their own self-preservation—to any advance of the world revolution. What is new over the past decade is Washington's decision to respond to the long-standing overtures of the bureaucratic castes.

Within the framework of their détente agreements, however, Moscow and Beijing have responded differently to the imperialist drive against the Vietnamese revolution.

Because of geographical proximity, the impact of revolutionary advances in Southeast Asia is more directly threatening to Beijing than to Moscow. This is particularly true at the present time, when the Beijing-based caste is under severe internal strain. So, while Beijing reacted to the advance of the Vietnamese revolution by openly expressing its visceral hatred, the Moscow-based caste, although likewise hostile to advances of the Vietnamese

revolution, did not feel its impact with the same urgency.

Furthermore, Southeast Asia is one of the few areas in the world where Beijing has significant political and military weight and is thus under great pressure from the imperialists to prove its reliability as a counterrevolutionary force. Moscow, by contrast, has greater options for maneuver with imperialism. The Kremlin sought to exert increased leverage in its dealings with Washington by establishing a formal alliance with Hanoi.

To try to contain the Vietnamese revolution, the imperialists turned to Beijing for military aid, and to Moscow for diplomatic aid. While Beijing invaded Vietnam, Moscow pressured Hanoi to reach a Geneva-type settlement over Kampuchea acceptable to the imperialists.

II. Imperialist Pressure and the Sino-Soviet Conflict

The current world situation, marked by the Washington-Moscow and Washington-Beijing détente arrangements, has intensified the Sino-Soviet conflict, to the advantage of the imperialists.

Both Moscow and Beijing fear that imperialism's relations with the other will be pursued at the expense of their own détente plans. Each of the castes, to enhance its own bargaining strength with imperialism, strives for influence over mass organizations throughout the world, and, in particular, for influence over the regimes of the other workers states. Moscow, as the stronger power by far, is in a much better bargaining position on a world scale. But Beijing has significant strength in its immediate border areas in Southeast Asia, where it is determined to resist Moscow's inroads in its leverage.

This competition serves to weaken all the workers states in face of imperialism. Each caste, to counterbalance the other, makes greater and greater concessions to imperialism.

The Moscow-Beijing competition is not rooted in an inherent drive to expand their national base at the expense of the other. It does not reflect a jockeying for position in preparation for a major war between these two world powers, although short-lived border wars are possible.

The Sino-Soviet conflict itself takes place within the basic framework of the world class struggle, in which the ruling classes confront the workers and their allies. On the decisive questions—such as revolutions—the bureaucratic castes in Moscow and Beijing are not independent

agents. The castes can be forced into situations in which they must defend against imperialist attack the states and the property relations from which they derive their privileges. But the fundamental interests of the castes are opposed to the interests of the workers. The castes need to seek accommodation with imperialism; thus they basically act as transmission belts for imperialist pressure against the working class.

The Sino-Soviet dispute is a result of the fact that imperialist pressure takes different forms and operates at different rhythms toward each of the national bureaucratic castes. This provokes differing and conflicting responses on their parts, as they compete to obtain favorable relations with imperialism.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, imperialism began pulling back from its extreme "containment/rollback" stance toward the Soviet Union. At the same time it continued to maintain a very aggressive posture toward China. There the socialist revolution was fresher, and its immediate impact was still felt throughout the colonial world.

Moscow's effort to curry favor with the imperialists necessitated betrayal of the Chinese workers state in face of imperialist economic boycott and military pressure. The withdrawal of Soviet economic aid; the refusal to defend China in the Sino-Indian war; and the failure to guarantee China's defense in the event of an imperialist military attack were notable examples. The difference on the level of material interests was reflected politically. Beijing, facing acute imperialist pressure, responded by escalating its anti-imperialist rhetoric and pretenses of economic self-sufficiency, while denouncing Soviet "revisionism." Moscow could not permit the example of the Chinese revolution to challenge the monolithic political framework it was trying to maintain.

In Southeast Asia today it is the fresh Vietnamese revolution that has been subjected to the fiercest immediate aggression of the imperialists. And it is to Beijing as well as Moscow that the imperialists have turned for help, exploiting the Sino-Soviet dispute for their own ends.

From this standpoint, the Sino-Soviet conflict was a factor in the recent events in Indochina. But it is subordinate to the contending class forces of imperialism on one side and the workers and peasants on the other—because the Sino-Soviet conflict itself is a product of imperialist pressure.

The strongest imperialist powers—the USA, Japan, West Germany, France, and Britain—have all been competing for trade relations with Beijing as well as Moscow. The Japanese capitalists gained the initial advantage in this competition over trade with Beijing. But the British and American capitalists are now closing the gap, negotiating expanded trade deals—and arms deals, as well. Beijing has also been



Soldiers in Hanoi rally against Chinese invasion.

able to take advantage of this rivalry to gain better terms of trade with Tokyo.

Despite its weakened condition, American imperialism proved that it still retains great economic capacities *vis-à-vis* its rivals. It also showed its ability to use the leverage of its preponderant military power to economic advantage.

The imperialist propaganda campaign during Beijing's invasion of Vietnam showed that an important component of its political strategy today is to try to reverse the existing antiwar feelings of the masses and create a climate in which working people will once again accept the large-scale use of imperialist troops against the world revolution. Behind the talk of preserving peace and stability lies preparations for new wars. This campaign is closely linked to the capitalist economic offensive against the working class in all the imperialist countries.

III. The Invasion of Vietnam

On February 17, 1979, troops of the

People's Republic of China invaded the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, initiating a large-scale border war. Within less than three weeks, Beijing began withdrawing its troops, although it has held on to some territory and has threatened to provoke a new flareup of armed conflict.

Considerable material damage and loss of life were inflicted on the Vietnamese people. But Washington and the Beijing Stalinists failed to achieve their main goals.

The roots of the China-Vietnam border war lay in Washington's stepped-up campaign against the Vietnamese revolution and against the threat of anticapitalist advances elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

The major concerns for the imperialists were:

1. The anticapitalist measures taken in southern Vietnam between 1975-1978, bringing about the political unification of the country, the expropriation of the remaining capitalist strongholds in the South, and the consolidation of a workers

state throughout Vietnam.

2. The toppling of the capitalist Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea in December 1978-January 1979 by the combined military efforts of the anti-Pol Pot Kampuchean forces and the Vietnamese army. This gave encouragement to the masses of Kampuchea and upset the imperialists' plans to use the Pol Pot regime as a buffer against the spread of socialist revolution elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

3. The heightened threat of anticapitalist mass mobilizations elsewhere in Southeast Asia—particularly in Thailand, where the Kriangsak dictatorship has been weakened and its opponents encouraged both in the urban centers and the countryside; and in Laos, where the social revolution has deepened under the impact of the recent events.

As part of their effort to stem the advance of the socialist revolution in Southeast Asia, Washington and the other major imperialist governments have been trying to shore up the capitalist regimes of the ASEAN regional alliance (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand). In particular, Washington has stepped up arms aid to the Thai military dictatorship. Bangkok has also been used as a funnel for military aid to rightist guerrillas in Kampuchea and Laos.

Hanoi considered that it was compelled, as a defensive measure, to take action to overturn the hostile Pol Pot regime. The main immediate objective of the imperialists has been to force Hanoi to remove its troops from Kampuchea, facilitating the overturn of the new Kampuchean government and the imposition of a proimperialist government there.

But to attempt to overthrow the new government in Kampuchea required a greater military effort than was possible by the Pol Pot and Khmer Serai forces. Rather than taking on the antiwar workers in their own countries by open military intervention, the imperialists enlisted the help of Beijing. In return for improved diplomatic relations and the promise of major economic aid, the Chinese Stalinists endeavored to "teach Vietnam a lesson." Their objective was to carry out a punitive expedition to prove their reliability as a counterrevolutionary force against the spread of the Indochinese revolution. The goal was to force Vietnam out of Kampuchea, as the imperialists wanted.

An additional objective of the imperialists was to use the war to propaganda advantage to discredit Marxism and weaken the labor movement. This propaganda objective was particularly important to Washington, which has been engaged in an ongoing effort to reverse the still-widespread antiwar attitudes of the American people, so that they will once again accept the use of U.S. troops to intervene in the affairs of other countries.

Key events before and during Beijing's

invasion of Vietnam confirmed the collusion between imperialism and the Chinese Stalinists.

The expropriation of the last capitalist bastions in the southern part of Vietnam and the consolidation of the workers state throughout the country was met by universal hostility from the imperialists. This included a hypocritical propaganda campaign on behalf of the expropriated mer-

tween Washington and Beijing; high-level trade missions to Beijing and the negotiation of major economic agreements by both London and Washington; and the continued efforts by Bonn and Tokyo to consolidate major trade deals with Beijing. In addition, with varying degrees of forthrightness, most of the major capitalist media in the imperialist countries backed Beijing's invasion.



Pol Pot's peasant soldiers defeated Lon Nol regime.

chants and traders (the "boat people") and the former functionaries of the old Saigon regime (portrayed as victims of a so-called Vietnamese Gulag); continuation of economic and diplomatic pressure against Vietnam; bolstering imperialist economic and military aid to the surrounding capitalist states; renewing and stepping up economic and diplomatic relations with the Pol Pot regime; and speeding up the establishment of closer relations with Beijing, especially by Washington and Tokyo.

Consultations on Beijing's invasion plans were carried out in Washington and Tokyo. During his visits to these capitals, Deng publicly announced Beijing's intention to "punish" Vietnam. Although Washington initially feigned innocence about the actual invasion, the State Department later admitted that it had been informed in advance of the plans.

During the invasion, the imperialists demonstratively adopted a posture of "business as usual" toward Beijing. The aim was to make clear their full backing for the invasion without taking direct responsibility for it. This stance included ceremonies establishing full diplomatic relations be-

As a deterrent to Soviet aid to Vietnam, Washington dispatched a nuclear-armed naval task force off the Vietnamese coast during the war. In addition, Washington made a point of publicly stepping up its military aid to the Thai regime.

The imperialists launched a concerted diplomatic campaign to win support for a solution to the conflict that, in the guise of evenhandedness, fully reflected their objectives. This included the proposal for reciprocal withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea and Chinese troops from Vietnam, and a Geneva-type conference to impose an ostensibly neutral (but actually capitalist and proimperialist) government in Kampuchea. Beijing, of course, immediately accepted the formula for reciprocal withdrawal, as well as the proposal for a "neutral" Kampuchea to be headed by a capitalist figure such as Sihanouk.

The invasion of Vietnam, however, failed to produce the imperialist's main objectives. Vietnamese troops were not forced to withdraw from Kampuchea, nor has a proimperialist regime been installed there. To the contrary, while the China-Vietnam border war was raging, Pol Pot

forces were routed from the last provincial capitals they held. Struggles by the toiling masses throughout the region have been facilitated. The capacity of the imperialists and Stalinists to block revolutionary advances has been weakened.

The Beijing Stalinists also suffered a setback. Although they demonstrated their willingness to go to war to prove their usefulness to the imperialists, they exposed their own weaknesses. They laid waste the areas they occupied but were unable to deal a "punishing" military blow to the Vietnamese army. On the political level, Beijing suffered a clear setback. Widespread dissatisfaction or opposition to the war came to the surface within China. This will create difficulties for the Deng regime in the period ahead, and could further open the door to the expression of working-class and peasant opposition to Stalinist policies. The Beijing Stalinists also won near universal condemnation in the world working-class movement; never have they been so isolated as they are today.

Despite improved diplomatic and trade relations with the imperialists, the Chinese workers state has been made more vulnerable to imperialist pressure, and weakened in face of the ultimate danger of military attack aimed at capitalist restoration.

Although Hanoi succeeded in organizing the military defense of Vietnam, due to its Stalinist character it failed to carry out an internationalist campaign directed at winning the support of the Chinese people, including the soldiers of the Chinese army. In Kampuchea Hanoi still seeks to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with imperialism, rather than promoting a socialist revolution.

The withdrawal of the Chinese army from Vietnam, however, and the consolidation of the victory against the Pol Pot forces will encourage action by the masses there. The impulse given to socialist revolution elsewhere in Southeast Asia, particularly in Laos and Thailand, will ultimately work to undermine the hold of the bureaucratic caste in Hanoi over the Vietnamese masses.

Moscow's stance in face of the current imperialist offensive against Vietnam has been fundamentally the same as it was during the height of the massive U.S. military intervention. Its military and economic aid to Vietnam has been far below what Vietnam needs, and has been used to exert pressure on Hanoi to meet Moscow's foreign policy objectives. The Moscow Stalinists have been in complicity with Washington's diplomatic pressure on Hanoi.

Moscow's central concern has been that the Washington-Beijing alliance will impair Soviet-U.S. relations. In line with this stance, Moscow systematically covered up for U.S. imperialism. The clearest expression of this came in Brezhnev's major policy speech on the China-Vietnam

border war, given on March 2, 1979. Brezhnev branded China "the most serious threat to peace in the whole world," while failing even to mention Washington's role in the invasion. Moscow's competition with Beijing for imperialism's favor has led it to wage a racist anti-Chinese propaganda campaign within the USSR.

In contrast to Moscow's class-collaborationist line, the position of the Castro leadership was marked by: 1. assertion of the need to aid the Vietnamese



POL POT

revolution to the fullest extent possible; 2. mobilization of the Cuban masses in a spirit of internationalist solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution; 3. condemnation of Washington's responsibility in the conflict; 4. exposure of the Washington-Beijing objective of restoring a proimperialist regime in Kampuchea; 5. differentiation between the Beijing regime (condemned for its traitorous action) and the Chinese people (to whom solidarity was extended). Cuba's position was a continuation of its proletarian internationalist line, as expressed in Che Guevara's famous slogan, "Create Two, Three . . . Many Vietnams!"

The statements by the Cuban government that it was prepared, if requested, to send troops to aid Vietnam was not only a declaration of internationalism, a defiance of imperialism, and a condemnation of Beijing. It was also a clear criticism (within the diplomatic constraints imposed on Havana) of Moscow's stinginess in giving aid to Vietnam. It helped Vietnam fend off the intense imperialist pressure for withdrawal from Kampuchea.

The revolutionary position taken by the Cuban leadership—once again risking retaliation from Washington—confirms that

they continue to believe that the fate of Cuba itself depends first of all on the defense and extension of the world revolution. The popularization of this view aids the working people and peasants of Indochina. As a result of this stand, the prestige of the Castro leadership will rise in the eyes of the revolutionary-minded working people throughout the world.

As part of their continuing offensive against the world revolution, the imperialists utilized the China-Vietnam border war to wage a propaganda offensive that included the following main themes:

1. That Washington and the other imperialist powers were not responsible for the invasion of Vietnam; that it was a war rooted in rivalries between "socialist countries," unrelated to any imperialist drive against revolutionary change in Southeast Asia; that the imperialists' role in such conflicts could be that of an "honest broker," helping to restore peace and stability.

2. That workers states have a built-in drive toward war; that communists (and socialists) are prone to fratricidal conflicts; that Marxism, which claims that socialism will eliminate the roots of war, is now a proven failure.

3. That the Sino-Soviet dispute and the rivalry between Beijing and Hanoi for spheres of influence in Southeast Asia was the basic framework for the border war; that the Sino-Soviet dispute could escalate into a third world war; that world politics is entering a new era marked by wars among workers states.

4. That war is caused by age-old problems that exist independently of economic or social systems—problems such as nationalism and national hatreds, struggles over spheres of influence, the need to respond to affronts to national prestige and power rather than "lose face" on the international arena.

5. That after the imperialist armed forces were driven out of Indochina in 1975, the inherent instability in this backward and benighted region exploded into war.

The thrust of this propaganda campaign was designed to win support for the idea that "enlightened" diplomatic and military action by the imperialists, particularly by Washington, could contain the destabilizing impact of developments that threaten world war. In the words of the *Wall Street Journal*, "the spiral into disorder can be averted only if the U.S. starts to assert itself once again."

This attempt by the U.S. imperialists to chip away at the mass antiwar sentiment that exists met with little success in the American working class. Open U.S. military interventions in other countries would still be met by profound suspicion and massive opposition.

However, the worldwide capitalist ideological offensive did manage to create social-patriotic pressure and exacerbate disorientation and demoralization among

petty-bourgeois sectors of the working-class movement and radical circles, which echoed many aspects of the propaganda themes promoted by the imperialists.

In particular, many of these tendencies advanced essentially the same political solution to the conflict as the imperialists: reciprocal withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea and Chinese troops from Vietnam. In general, the explanations for the war that were given by the petty-bourgeois tendencies also de-emphasized the centrality of the imperialist drive against revolutionary change in Southeast Asia. They generally discounted the continuing imperialist role.

In contrast to these capitulatory tendencies, the revolutionary Marxist position on the war centered its fire on the imperialists, and stressed slogans along the following lines:

Hands off Vietnam! Stop the imperialist campaign against the Vietnamese revolution! Solidarity with the struggles of the masses of Kampuchea, Laos, and Thailand against imperialist domination! For massive economic aid to rebuild Indochina!

Within that framework, revolutionary Marxists demanded the immediate withdrawal of Beijing's troops from Vietnam. Revolutionists called on the Soviet Union to give the Vietnamese whatever military supplies they needed—no strings attached—to fend off Beijing's attack, while warning the Kremlin bureaucracy to keep hands of China.

IV. Consolidation of Vietnamese Workers State

The victory of the liberation forces in Vietnam on April 30, 1975, was greeted with an explosion of popular enthusiasm by the masses of workers and peasants.

Workers seized factories to prevent sabotage and theft by fleeing capitalists. Factory and neighborhood committees were formed to organize social and economic life, usually under the leadership of Vietnamese CP cadres. The actions of the masses showed that they looked forward to the speedy overturn of capitalism and the reunification of the country.

The imperialists left behind massive devastation and a disrupted economy. Unemployment was 3.5 million. There were hundreds of thousands of homeless. Prostitution, drug addiction, and disease were widespread in the urban centers. Huge amounts of once-fertile farmland were bomb-cratered, defoliated, and unproductive. Millions of peasants had been forced into the cities.

The Vietnamese CP leaders at first sought to preserve a separate government and capitalist property relations in southern Vietnam. They hoped this would enable them to obtain aid and establish trade with the imperialists, and that the remaining capitalists in the South could be in-

duced to help revive the shattered economy.

Le Duan outlined the VCP's policy in a speech on May 15, 1975. He projected



LE DUAN

“socialist construction” for the North, but the creation of “a prosperous national-democratic economy” for the South. The Provisional Revolutionary Government was installed as a separate entity in the South on June 6, 1975.

The mass workers mobilization that emerged with liberation was dampened by this class-collaborationist policy, but it was not crushed or eliminated.

The new regime did not allow democratic rights. But it enjoyed sufficient prestige, in the absence of any alternative anticapitalist leadership, to keep control of the masses without resort to extreme repression.

The policy of courting imperialist help and reviving the economy on a capitalist basis failed. Washington reneged on its 1973 promise to give \$2.2 billion in reconstruction aid and instead imposed a tight economic boycott. Trade with other imperialist powers was minimal; they had no confidence in the VCP's capacity to stabilize capitalism in the South, preferring instead to use economic pressure to weaken the regime.

The Vietnamese capitalists who had remained in the South made no new investments, and profited from their near-total control of commerce. Vietnam remained plagued by inflation, unemployment, and shortages.

As for Vietnam's professed allies, things were not much better. Beijing demanded payment for rice. Moscow stingily extended interest-bearing loans, insufficient

to meet Vietnam's needs, and refused to grant long-term credits requested by Hanoi.

In this situation, and under constant pressure from the masses, the VCP was forced to shift from acting as the guardian of capitalist property relations.

The stage of a workers and farmers government was reached after August 1975, when banks were nationalized, some leading merchants were arrested, and a currency reform was carried out. These moves were accompanied by popular demonstrations of outrage against price-gouging, hoarding merchants.

In November 1975 a unified National Assembly for all Vietnam was projected. In July 1976 this body met and formally carried out reunification.

But Hanoi hesitated to expropriate the Southern capitalists, still hoping for imperialist aid, trade, credits, and investment (particularly in offshore oil).

By early 1978, however, it was clear that the imperialists were maintaining and increasing their diplomatic, economic, and military pressure. Furthermore, devastating floods and droughts in 1976 and 1977 forced a drastic reduction of the rice ration; popular anger rose against the hoarding, black-marketeering merchants who profited from their control of trade under shortage conditions. The attempt to apply a national economic plan to contradictory economic structures had failed, dangerously increasing dislocations in the North as well. Significant numbers of Stalinist cadres in the South had been forging close and profitable links to the capitalists.

In March 1978 thousands of people were organized under the direction of army cadres to seize the shops and goods of the big merchants. The expropriation of 30,000 firms was announced. Soon after, mass demonstrations were organized to crack down on the black market. In May, a single currency was introduced for the country.

These measures signaled the economic unification of Vietnam, establishing a workers state of 50 million people, the third largest in the world.

Vietnam is a deformed workers state. The parasitic caste that dominates the workers and peasants can only be removed by a political revolution and the establishment of workers democracy.

The social revolution in Vietnam has great accomplishments to its credit, despite the grave difficulties caused by the imperialist war, the subsequent economic blockade, and natural disasters.

Capitalism has been abolished, and Vietnam is free of imperialist domination. Unemployment has been vastly reduced. Education and medical care are being extended steadily, with the reduction of illiteracy and the elimination of formerly common epidemic diseases. Through rationing, a more equitable system of food distribution lessens the disastrous effects of food shortages. About 1 million people

have been persuaded to move from the overcrowded cities to "new economic zones," where agriculture is being restored under extremely difficult living conditions. The institution of national economic planning for all of Vietnam opens the door to significant improvement in the standard of living.

These conquests, consolidated through the mobilization of mass pressure, contrast sharply with the social disaster in Kampuchea during the same period.

The Vietnamese masses have many criticisms of the VCP for its privileges, its antidemocratic practices, for its corruption and mismanagement. But they are ready to fight to defend their gains against any attack.

Towards the end of 1977, as Vietnam headed toward elimination of the last strongholds of capitalism, the imperialists began a new offensive. Their immediate aim was to contain the revolution, to weaken it, to destabilize Vietnam economically, and to prevent the extension of the revolutionary impulse to Laos, Kampuchea, and Thailand.

The Pol Pot regime, in concert with the imperialist efforts, broke relations with Hanoi and stepped up raids against Vietnam's borders, particularly in the areas of the "new economic zones." At the same time, the Pol Pot regime began to mend its fences with the Kriangsak dictatorship in Thailand and the other ASEAN regimes. Beijing, for its part, showed increasing hostility to Vietnam, building up its troop strength on the border. Thus both Pnompenh and Beijing signaled their collusion with imperialism against the Vietnamese revolution.

Despite numerous diplomatic overtures by Hanoi, Washington reaffirmed its refusal to recognize the Vietnamese government. With the massive expropriations in early 1978, imperialist hostility to Vietnam increased. In September 1978, at the very time that Hanoi was appealing for emergency food aid, Carter reaffirmed the U.S. trade embargo against Vietnam.

In face of this hostility and encirclement, Hanoi felt compelled to act while it still had a favorable opportunity, to take a military initiative against Pol Pot in cooperation with Kampuchean rebels. The orientation to topple the increasingly proimperialist Pol Pot regime was an act of self-defense for the Vietnamese workers state. The fall of Pol Pot was a step forward for the Vietnamese revolution and for the Kampuchean workers and peasants.

Accompanying the imperialists' military and economic pressures has been a propaganda campaign centering on three themes:

1. They bemoan the "tragic" fate of the "boat people," who are said to be fleeing oppression in Vietnam. Actually, most of the "boat people" are expropriated merchants, traders, and the like who left

Vietnam voluntarily after losing their property and privileges. The imperialists, whose bombs forced millions of people into homelessness, have hypocritically closed their own doors to the "boat people."

2. They charge that there is a "Gulag" in southern Vietnam, claiming that the regime is just as repressive as its U.S.-backed predecessor. But those people being held in "reeducation camps" are mostly the officials and army officers of the old regime, many of them guilty of war crimes. They have not been treated in the horrendous manner they once treated the liberation fighters who fell into their hands.

There are no equivalents in southern Vietnam to Stalin's "Gulag" prison camps, in which millions of working-class dissenters perished. The capitalist propaganda on this helps divert attention from the very real capitalist "Gulags" elsewhere in Southeast Asia such as Indonesia and the Philippines. It is also aimed at justifying the imperialist war in Vietnam, and laying the groundwork for imperialist military intervention elsewhere.

3. They claim that Vietnam is an expansionist power, seeking to enlarge its ancient "sphere of influence" and dominate the people of Indochina. This propaganda line is designed to discredit resistance to imperialist maneuvers, the alliance between Laos and Vietnam, and the toppling of Pol Pot.

The Fourth International exposes and condemns these lies and explains the truth about Vietnam.

The devastation of war, imperialist economic pressure, and the effects of recent droughts and flooding weigh heavily on the people of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea. The Fourth International places the blame for this first and foremost on imperialism and calls for massive assistance to reconstruct these countries. We call for full diplomatic relations with the government of Vietnam and the new government of Kampuchea, and for an end to the U.S. economic blockade. We demand that the imperialists end their arms shipments to Southeast Asia and withdraw the U.S. Seventh Fleet and all military bases now!

V. The Class Struggle in Kampuchea

In March 1970 a U.S.-backed coup toppled the Sihanouk regime and installed Lon Nol's military dictatorship in Kampuchea. Long-simmering unrest exploded.

The Vietnamese CP had supported Sihanouk's landlord-capitalist regime in exchange for the use of eastern Kampuchea as a military base. When the Lon Nol regime, with U.S. and Saigon army backing, moved to crush these bases, the Vietnamese acted in self-defense. They joined with Kampuchean Communist Party-led guerrillas to fight Lon Nol. An uprising swept the countryside, and a powerful peasant army of 50,000 was mobilized. The "Khmer Rouge" army quickly won control of almost the entire countryside.

Like the Vietnamese CP, the Kampuchean CP was a Stalinist party. Part of an international current in the workers movement, the KCP was petty-bourgeois in program, composition, and leadership. It advocated the preservation of a reformed capitalism, rather than the establishment of a workers state. For this purpose, the KCP created the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), headed by Prince Sihanouk and encompassing other landlord-capitalist politicians.

At the time of the Paris Accords of January 1973, the VCP pressed the KCP leaders to reach a settlement with the Lon Nol dictatorship. Most Khmer Rouge leaders appear to have opposed this. In response, the Vietnamese Stalinists sharply reduced their military assistance, leaving the Kampuchean fighters isolated during the most savage U.S. bombing of the Indochina war.

The wing of the Kampuchean CP led by Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, and Khieu Samphan used this as a pretext to purge the party of those suspected of "pro-Vietnamese" sympathies. At the same time, they carried out sweeping repression in the liberated zones most tightly under their control, robbing the land of poor peasants as well as expropriating the exploiters, and carrying out forced population transfers.

The fall of Pnompenh to Khmer Rouge forces on April 17, 1975, placed the KCP leaders at the head of a nation whose social and economic structure had been shattered by civil war and U.S. bombing. Massive starvation was a real danger. Under these circumstances, only the establishment of a workers and peasants government and the mobilization of the oppressed and exploited masses to topple capitalism could have blocked economic and social catastrophe, and opened the road forward.

But the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan wing of the Khmer Rouge followed an opposite course.

Upon coming to power, the Pol Pot regime carried out sweeping nationalizations of private property. Not only were the imperialists, the Kampuchean bourgeoisie, and the landlords expropriated, but the property of the poorer peasants and petty urban traders and peddlers was seized as well. The Pol Pot forces executed, imprisoned, and suppressed not only the former officials of the old regime, but real or imagined dissidents of any kind. The city workers and other technically skilled and educated persons were particularly suspect.

From its first day in Pnompenh, the regime launched a brutal reactionary drive against the workers and urban poor, forcibly expelling them to the countryside and treating them as enemies. Shortly thereafter the regime moved brutally to disperse the poor peasants throughout Kampuchea, conducting forced migrations to agricultural labor camps. Even cooking utensils and extra clothing belonging to the poor



Phnompenh on April 17, 1975, the day the Lon Nol regime fell.

peasants were eventually confiscated. The aim was to atomize the urban and rural masses and prevent resistance. The cost was great human suffering: death, illness, and starvation.

The Pol Pot regime slashed or eliminated public services of all kinds. They decreed the seven-day workweek and extended the hours of the working day. They instituted child labor. They eliminated all higher education and most elementary education, as well as most medical care. Transportation and communications networks were slashed to a minimum or collapsed altogether.

At the same time privileges enabling better living conditions were granted the Khmer Rouge.

To enforce this brutal reduction in the expectations and living standards of the masses, the regime instituted a totalitarian repression that enveloped every aspect of every individual's life.

The Pol Pot regime's "nationalizations" and "collectivizations" had nothing in common with the expropriation of the capitalists and landlords for which the workers and peasants had fought. The workers were dispersed; industrial production and manufacture were set back. The peasant mobilizations that had brought the Khmer Rouge to power were reversed. The social forces capable of advancing the anticapitalist struggle were crushed.

The capitalist state apparatus that had previously existed was smashed, but the emergence of a workers and peasants government was blocked. Any chance for a political alliance between the proletariat and the poor rural toilers was destroyed. The brutal and sudden expropriation of the poor peasants was a blow to the interests of the workers. The working class was not able to replace the shattered foundations of Kampuchean society with a new social order. The so-called suppression of money

did not, and could not, eliminate either commodity circulation or the use of money commodities. This was a temporary, administrative measure, whose goal and main effect was a further restriction of the consumption of the masses in favor of the privileged apparatus.

Without a thoroughgoing social revolution—clear economic and social advances for the toiling masses which they are willing to defend against all attempts to reverse them—there is only one possible outcome of sweeping expropriations by a petty-bourgeois leadership. That is increasing private capitalist accumulation by the petty bourgeoisie in the government bureaucracy, the army, the agricultural labor camps, and in assorted nooks and crannies of the economy. In this respect, Kampuchea, albeit with a primitive, highly dislocated economy, resembled other capitalist states where sweeping nationalization has

occurred, rather than workers states such as China or Vietnam.

The nationalization of property is not of itself sufficient to establish a workers state. Also necessary is the establishment of the workers as the ruling class through the transformation of the relations of production in the interests of the workers and their allies.

This was demonstrated most clearly in the Russian and Cuban revolutions, where revolutionary leaderships consciously guided the mass upheaval. It was also shown in the socialist revolutions that were deformed by Stalinist misleadership—from the overturns in Eastern Europe and China to the social transformations that reached a qualitative turning point in Vietnam last year. The nationalizations and forced labor camps in Kampuchea were not a conquest of the workers and in no way constituted a step toward solving the social and economic problems facing the Kampuchean masses.

Despite a temporary estrangement, the Pol Pot regime found that it required imperialist backing as the ultimate weapon against the workers and peasants, particularly in face of the revolutionary process in Vietnam. Pnompenh's alliance with Beijing also grew closer, as the latter bid more and more openly for imperialist aid.

The imperialists at first greatly distrusted the Khmer Rouge regime and exploited its brutal actions for anticommunist propaganda purposes. But as the revolutionary process deepened in Vietnam, the imperialists and the neighboring capitalist regimes began looking at Kampuchea in a new light.

From the beginning, the Pol Pot regime resorted to anti-Vietnamese chauvinism and provoked military conflicts on the border, in hopes of sealing off the impact of the Vietnamese revolution. These incidents accelerated to the level of a border war in late 1977, forcing Vietnam to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people from the border regions. On December 31, 1977, Kampuchea broke relations with Vietnam.

The Pol Pot regime established diplomatic relations with Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It moved toward establishing relations with Australia.

Border incidents between Kampuchea and Thailand receded. Border incidents between Kampuchea and Laos stepped up.

News reports in the capitalist press began to softpedal the violations of human rights in Kampuchea. Instead, capitalist propaganda focused on the threat of "Vietnamese expansionism." In late 1978, the U.S. State Department stressed—in reference to Kampuchea—the need for "a stable system of independent states." Japanese imperialism started making plans to aid the Pol Pot regime, to try to make it economically viable in face of the threatening example of the Vietnamese revolution.

Oppositionists in Kampuchea, however,

who responded to the pressure of the workers and peasants, hoped for support from the Vietnamese revolution.

In mid-1978—after the Kampuchean regime had broken diplomatic relations with Vietnam, after Pnompenh launched increasingly bloody border raids despite Vietnamese retaliation, and after Pnompenh rejected all offers to negotiate, indicating they felt confident of powerful backing—Hanoi abandoned its earlier goal of resolving the differences peacefully. In addition to the aid that Pnompenh received from Beijing, Hanoi had good reason to assume that Pol Pot would soon be receiving U.S. economic, diplomatic, and military help as part of the imperialist efforts to put pressure on Vietnam.

In face of this situation, Hanoi strengthened its ties with oppositionists within the KCP and the Khmer Rouge apparatus. Guerrilla warfare against the Pol Pot regime started up in eastern Kampuchea. Other rebellions occurred elsewhere.

The need to defend the Vietnamese workers state led Hanoi to send massive numbers of troops into Kampuchea in December 1978, helping the rebels to establish a new government.

The Fourth International hails the fall of Pol Pot as an advance for the Kampuchean revolution. This creates an opening for the masses to struggle for a workers and peasants government that can undertake the measures and lead the mobilizations necessary to establish a workers state.

The class-collaborationist line of the Vietnamese Stalinists and the new Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea stand in the way of such an advance. Nevertheless, in response to the pressure of the imperialists and the demands of the masses, they may be forced to go further than they originally intended in undertaking anticapitalist measures.

Immediately after the fall of Pol Pot, the new government and its Vietnamese backers were put under heavy pressure in three key policy areas: 1. to reorganize and restore agricultural production and take steps to undo the damage done by Pol Pot's forced labor camps; 2. to renew and expand industrial production and manufacture and to provide for the livelihood of the people returning to the cities and villages; and 3. to establish administrative and military structures that can mobilize and arm the masses to protect the population from punitive raids by the Khmer Rouge.

Although the Heng Samrin government has had to rely to a degree on popular mobilizations, it cannot be given any confidence to carry out the measures needed. This requires the active intervention of the workers and peasants. The goal of the Fourth International is to support and participate in the struggles of the Kampuchean workers and peasants in order to help forge a mass revolutionary

Marxist, genuinely internationalist party in Kampuchea.

A key immediate need is for food, medical supplies, and reconstruction aid. An international campaign should be launched demanding that all governments, particularly the imperialists, who bear the main responsibility, grant massive aid to reconstruct Kampuchea and stave off the threat of famine; for recognition of the new Pnompenh regime; and for an end to imperialist, Thai, and Beijing backing for the Pol Pot and Khmer Serai forces.

VI. Revolutionary Change in Southeast Asia

The victory of the liberation forces in Vietnam in 1975 shifted the relationship of class forces throughout Southeast Asia in favor of the working class and its toiling allies.

The greatest advances in the intervening years outside Vietnam have been in Laos, one of the poorest and smallest countries of Asia.

Following the 1973 Paris Accords, a coalition government, including both the Stalinist Pathet Lao and proimperialist forces, was established in Vientiane. But after the 1975 victory in Vietnam, mobilizations of workers, students, and urban poor precipitated the breakup of the coalition. In December 1975 the Pathet Lao dispersed the coalition and took sole responsibility for the government.

In the following three years, the government of Premier Kayson Phomvihane has followed a vacillating but increasingly anticapitalist course. The royal army was disbanded. The monarchy was abolished. The big landlords were expropriated, and land distributed to landless peasants. The privileges of the caste of Buddhist monks were reduced. Foreign firms were expropriated and most Laotian-owned businesses were placed under state or joint state-private ownership. Education and medical care were rapidly expanded. Although much trade still remains in private hands, the rationing of necessities was introduced.

The Phomvihane government is trying to end large-scale cultivation and trade in opium. (Opium had been the country's principal export under the old regime and the biggest concentration of merchant capital; its continued production facilitates imperialist economic penetration and poses a military threat from the strong, imperialist-backed mercenary armies connected with the opium trade.)

These moves mark the Laotian government as a workers and peasants government, although one that is dominated by a Stalinist party that ensures its own control over the mass mobilizations and does not allow democratic decision-making by the workers and peasants.

The Laotian government has forged a close alliance with Vietnam, formalized in the twenty-five-year military and economic

pact signed in July 1977. For this, the capitalist media denounces Laos as a "puppet" of Vietnam. In fact, Laos and Vietnam were brought closer together as a result of the developing social revolution in both countries.

The Fourth International rejects the counterrevolutionary slander campaign against the Laotian revolution. But we grant no political confidence to the Laotian Stalinists, who have indicated their fear of the spreading revolution by signing an "antisubversion" agreement with Thailand and by pressuring the Thai guerrillas to leave their bases in Laos. We stand for the construction of an independent revolutionary Marxist leadership in Laos, as in Vietnam and Kampuchea.

In the other countries of Southeast Asia the example of the Vietnamese and Laotian revolutions, combined with the effects of the imperialist economic crisis, has produced growing social unrest.

Most deeply affected was Thailand. It had already been shaken by an upsurge of workers, peasants and students in 1973, which toppled the dictatorship of Thanom Kittikachorn. A capitalist counteroffensive was launched in October 1976, with a rightist military coup that installed General Thanin Kravichien. A bloody repression began.

Popular unrest continued to deepen, however. The workers in trade unions and the peasants fighting for land refused to be intimidated. The capitalist rulers then changed course. A new coup brought General Kriangsak Chamanan to power in 1977. He tried to contain unrest by holding elections and introducing Thailand's first minimum wage. But in the existing conditions of economic crisis, the workers and peasants have become more impoverished under his rule.

A peasant war has been gaining momentum in the Thai countryside, particularly in the north and northeast. It has the support of the Peasants Federation of Thailand, which organized massive peasant demonstrations in Bangkok in the mid-1970s. Peasant insurgents headed by the Communist Party of Thailand are now reported to be operating in forty-six of Thailand's seventy-three provinces.

The Kriangsak regime saw the example of the Vietnamese revolution as a deadly threat and sought to prop up the Pol Pot regime as a buffer against the spread of the revolution. But Bangkok was dealt a blow when the overthrow of Pol Pot and the continued deepening of the revolution in Laos brought the revolutionary threat to Thailand's borders. In addition to asking Beijing to counsel restraint to the Thai CP, Kriangsak visited Moscow to seek its help in Kampuchea.

Elsewhere in the region—in Burma, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia—the social crisis continues, although in less intense form than in Indochina.

U.S. imperialism realizes that its ASEAN satellites cannot by themselves resist the spread of revolution. Massive direct use of imperialist military forces will be needed. Hence the current propaganda campaign that portrays "Vietnamese expansionism" or "Sino-Soviet competition" in Southeast Asia as the source of the war danger in that region. Behind this smoke-screen imperialism has canceled troop withdrawals from South Korea, and is moving to strengthen the Seventh Fleet, rearm Japan, and assure military ties with the Taiwan regime.

The Fourth International denounces the imperialist moves in East and Southeast Asia. We unconditionally defend the steps that the Vietnamese revolution has taken in response to the imperialist moves.

But we grant no political confidence to Hanoi. Hanoi does not aim to take advantage of the opportunities to extend the revolution in Southeast Asia. Like Beijing and Moscow, the caste in Vietnam seeks a class-collaborationist deal with U.S. imperialism. Pham Van Dong's declarations of opposition to the peasant struggle in Thailand during his tour of Southeast Asia in late 1978 indicate the willingness of the Hanoi leaders to move against revolutionary-minded workers and peasants if imperialism will agree to a détente with Vietnam.

However, the measures taken by Hanoi to defend the workers state encourage the workers and peasants of Vietnam and elsewhere in the region, and can facilitate class mobilizations that will take the social revolution further than the Stalinist misleaders intend.

VII. Washington and Beijing

The Chinese Stalinist leadership has been increasingly open in promoting its counterrevolutionary line.

This posture was already blatant in the early 1970s. Mao's regime established friendly relations with the Nixon government at the very time that Washington was brutalizing Vietnam with saturation bombing. Politically, it was not a very big step from that form of complicity with imperialism to the more direct form that Beijing took by invading Vietnam in 1979.

The Beijing Stalinists have always sought peaceful coexistence. Even in the heyday of its leftist rhetoric, in 1968, the Mao regime made clear overtures to Washington. But it was not until U.S. imperialism ran into deeper trouble in Indochina that Washington decided to accept Beijing's standing offer.

Washington's turn towards détente with Beijing released the Chinese Stalinists from the constraints on their official stance that had been previously imposed, owing to the hostility of U.S. imperialism. Beijing became brazen in its support for imperialism and the worst capitalist dictatorships of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It gave support to the shah's dictator-

ship in Iran and the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile; it endorsed the 1978 imperialist military intervention in Zaïre by French and Belgian troops backed by the United States and Britain; it hails NATO and the U.S.-Japan military treaty; it calls for American imperialism to "punish" the Cuban revolution.

Beijing has bid for a preferential détente relationship with Washington to the detriment of Moscow. Trade arrangements are increasing. For Washington, however, the relationship it has with Moscow remains central. The Soviet Union has qualitatively greater weight militarily. Moreover, Moscow retains far greater influence in the world working-class movement than Beijing, and can much more effectively intervene and affect the course of events in many countries to the benefit of imperialism. In most areas of the world Beijing's influence in the working class is limited. Nonetheless, in speaking in the name of 900 million people, its extreme verbal support for imperialism not only brings discredit to Chinese Stalinism but is useful to world capitalism.

The Chinese Stalinists do, however, have the capacity to directly affect developments in Southeast Asia.

During the long Indochina war Beijing continually urged restraint on the part of the liberation fighters. The continuation of this line was signaled most recently by: 1. Beijing's campaign in defense of the expropriated capitalist merchants and traders of southern Vietnam and its bitter hostility to the extension and consolidation of the Vietnamese workers state in the South; 2. Beijing's efforts to undermine the workers and farmers government in Laos; 3. Beijing's support for the brutal repression of workers and peasants by the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, and its success in helping to draw that regime closer to imperialism and the capitalist states of the region; 4. Beijing's open endorsement of the ASEAN capitalist regional bloc aiming to prevent the spread of revolution in the area.

Beijing has significant influence in the Stalinist parties of Southeast Asia, including in the Thai CP, which plays a prominent role in peasant struggles in the countryside.

Although Beijing continues to profess support for the struggles in Thailand, it has been acting to betray them. A high-level source in Bangkok described his government's reaction to Beijing's current policy as follows: "actions speak louder than words. We see no evidence of increased Chinese support for insurgency. So in this case the actions are different from the words." (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 10, 1978.) Bangkok sees accurately that Beijing's role in Thailand is to try to prevent the class struggle from threatening the ruling order.

Bangkok is also reported to have the following view of Beijing's role in South-

east Asia as a whole: "Nor do the Thais fully sympathize with Hanoi's charge that Peking's control of communist insurgency, the influence of the Overseas Chinese, and its economic weight are weapons designed to dominate Southeast Asia. The Thais view Chinese influence from within as potential support for the regime, if Thailand's foreign policy conforms to Peking's basic interests." (*Ibid.*)

This is an accurate assessment of Beijing's objective. Contrary to Hanoi's claims, Beijing is not aiming to dominate Southeast Asia and turn it into a Chinese "sphere of influence." Nor is it aiming to conquer or dominate Vietnam, or to topple the Hanoi government.

As a workers state, China does not have a built-in expansionist drive to exploit or dominate the working masses of other countries. It is fundamentally different from a capitalist state in this respect. On the contrary, the Chinese workers state is under constant pressure from imperialism and the imperialists' capitalist footholds in the region.

The government of China is dominated by a parasitic caste. The basic aim of this Stalinist caste is to preserve its privileges within the framework of the workers state. These privileges are in the area of consumption. The caste does not accumulate capital, and it does not have a drive to expand into new areas of trade or investment.

What the caste seeks, above all, is to steer a course toward *stability*, under pressure both from the imperialists and the class struggle.

Vis-à-vis the imperialists, and the neighboring capitalist states dominated by imperialism, such as those of ASEAN, Beijing seeks peaceful coexistence, that is, guarantees against attack and, if possible, friendly relations, technology, and trade.

Vis-à-vis the Chinese working people and peasants, and the toiling masses of the world, Beijing also seeks to be left alone, that is, to preserve the status quo. They constantly crush any motion toward workers democracy; they aim to head off the destabilizing impact of revolutionary outbursts in other countries; and they need to deliver economic progress in China to stave off mass discontent.

Deng Xiaoping's government is under particular pressure domestically at this time to deliver rapidly on its promise of the "Four Modernizations." This flows from the economic failures inherited from the Mao era—the hovering of agricultural production at subsistence level for two decades and the stagnation of industrial development—combined with popular discontent with the extreme political and cultural repression of the years following the so-called Cultural Revolution. This domestic pressure has made the bureaucracy especially anxious to obtain an infusion of advanced technology from Western imperialism.



Modernization is a pressing task in China.

This framework explains the Chinese invasion of Vietnam.

In return for improved diplomatic relations with the imperialists and economic aid and trade, Beijing has undertaken to do what it can to prevent revolutionary change, particularly in Southeast Asia. Beijing's invasion of Vietnam was a move in the service of imperialism against the threatening example of the Vietnamese revolution.

This framework also clarifies how the Sino-Soviet conflict relates to Southeast Asia.

Both Moscow and Beijing are motivated primarily by their objective of peaceful coexistence with imperialism. Each sees the other as a competitor in that objective (a rivalry that the imperialists continually aim to exacerbate and exploit).

Despite the bitter verbal attacks, neither Beijing nor Moscow is out to dominate or conquer the other. They are not competing for "spheres of influence" designed to protect themselves from economic offensives or military attacks by the other. The tension between them in Southeast Asia is not a spillover from the tension on the Sino-Soviet border.

Nor is the situation comparable to that when Moscow invaded Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968 to put down developments leading toward political revolution. There, the Kremlin sought to check unfolding processes that threatened the caste's own privileged position at home.

Politically motivated border wars are possible between Beijing and Moscow (one large-scale clash already occurred on the Ussuri River in 1969), just as they are possible between Beijing and Hanoi. But

the ruling class in each of the workers states—that is, the working class—will not permit the interbureaucratic rivalries to reach the point of imperiling their most fundamental class conquest, the workers states themselves.

Thus, the verbal violence of the Sino-Soviet dispute does not point to a new era of major wars between workers states. It is, rather, a sign that the respective Stalinist castes are desperate in their need to firm up their *détente* relationships with imperialism, and that each sees the other as a bitter competitor in that effort.

Far from pushing toward an era of "socialist world wars," the criminal policies of the Stalinist castes in Beijing and Moscow are undermining their stranglehold over the Soviet and Chinese workers, thereby bringing closer the day of final reckoning through the political revolution.

VIII. Where United Secretariat Majority Went Wrong

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International issued three declarations in the course of the developments in Indochina over the past period.

- A January 16, 1978, statement, "The Border 'War' Between Hanoi and Pnompenh," adopted unanimously by the Bureau of the United Secretariat and issued in the name of the United Secretariat. (Published in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 6, 1978.)

- A February 1, 1979, statement, "The War Between Hanoi and Pnompenh," approved by a majority of the Bureau of the United Secretariat. (Published in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 5, 1979.)

- A February 21, 1979, statement, "Chi-

nese Troops Out of Vietnam!" adopted by a majority of the Bureau of the United Secretariat. (Published in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, March 12, 1979.)

The line and analyses of all three statements are fundamentally wrong. Five major errors can be singled out.

1. *Failure to take the class struggle as the point of departure and see the responsibility of the imperialists in the conflicts.*

Neither the February 1, 1979, nor the February 21, 1979, statements takes note of the overturns of capitalist property relations in southern Vietnam as a factor in the conflicts. Neither statement recognizes the positive impact given to the class struggle in Kampuchea as a result of the overturn of the Pol Pot regime.

The February 1 statement, the major statement on the Vietnam-Kampuchea conflict, treats the *current* imperialist campaign against Vietnam as a factor of fifth-rate importance, barely mentioning it at the conclusion of the statements.

No mention is made in any of the three statements of the significance of the imperialists' prior turn toward the Pol Pot regime.

No consideration is given to the positive impact on the class struggle throughout Southeast Asia of the recent developments in Vietnam and Kampuchea.

The January 16, 1978, statement describes the conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea at that time as a "fratricidal war," a "bloody border conflict." Although correctly foreseeing that the conflict "could deteriorate into a broader military conflict," no mention is made of the imperialist objectives in Indochina, other than their attempt to exploit the conflict for anticommunist propaganda.

The February 1, 1979, statement says that in relation to the Vietnam-Kampuchea war, revolutionary Marxists concentrate "their main fire against imperialism." But imperialism is not presented as a causal factor in the conflict. The imperialists are charged only with the sin of hypocrisy—supporting Kampuchea's "national sovereignty" after having so ruthlessly bombed it in previous years, and with trying to profit politically from this issue, using it as a "pretext" against Vietnam. The imperialists' *actual objective* of installing a proimperialist government in Kampuchea is overlooked.

Despite the reference to concentrating the "main fire on the imperialists," the source of the conflict is presented as "the responsibility of the ruling bureaucracies" of the USSR, China, Vietnam, and Kampuchea, "without any distinction among them."

The January 16, 1968, statement does not specifically mention the class character of Kampuchea. The February 1, 1979, statement implies that Kampuchea is a workers state, by saying that the Vietnam-Kampuchea conflict is one of the "fratricidal wars and threats of military action between workers states." This is wrong.

In the February 21, 1979, statement on Beijing's invasion of Vietnam, the imperialists are presented only as trying to "exploit" the conflict to their advantage. The statement notes that Beijing acted in response to the overturn of the Pol Pot regime, but rejects imperialism's objectives in Kampuchea as a causal factor. The direct collusion between Beijing and Washington is not noted. (No mention is made of Deng Xiaoping's prior consultations in Washington and Tokyo, for example.) Beijing is presented only as "objectively" aiding the imperialists' goal of weakening Vietnam and strengthening the capitalist states of the region.

The February 21 statement asserts that Beijing's aggression "falls within a broader political context that gives it its true significance and scope. It is the conflict between the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, for which the Kremlin bears the historic responsibility, that constitutes the framework for the clashes between the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Khmer Rouge leaderships."

Thus, the axis of the statements of the United Secretariat was wrong.

2. *Failure to promote a correct revolutionary Marxist line in the conflicts.*

Grave errors in line flowed directly from the incorrect evaluations noted above.

The January 16, 1978, statement called for "an immediate suspension of the armed clashes" between Vietnam and Kampuchea and said "the border issue should be settled through open and public negotiations." It failed to raise the need to defend the Vietnamese workers state against the imperialist drive being carried out through the increasingly proimperialist government in Kampuchea.

The February 1, 1979, statement came out for "opposing the invasion of Cambo-

dia by the regular Vietnamese army." It advocated "immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese army from Cambodia." It thus failed to support the defensive military measures taken by the Vietnamese workers state.

Although stating opposition to the Pol Pot regime, the effect of the immediate withdrawal line, if implemented, would have facilitated the efforts of the Pol Pot forces to reestablish a proimperialist regime in Kampuchea, threatening the Vietnamese revolution as well. The line of the statement offered no perspective for the Kampuchean masses to assert their independent interests.

The February 21, 1979, statement on Beijing's invasion failed to direct its main slogans against imperialism.

Although the statement correctly called for the immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam and correctly warned against Soviet attacks against China, it failed to call on Moscow to give Vietnam whatever military supplies it needed to defend itself. This gave the impression of a pacifist appeal for Beijing to pull out.

Another error, albeit less grave, was the way in which the January 16, 1978, statement raised the call for a "Socialist United States of Indochina" and the February 1, 1979, statement the slogan of a "democratic socialist federation of the Indochinese peoples." Although this general objective is correct, the two statements presented it as an abstract substitute for addressing the immediate central problem confronting the Indochinese revolution. The way the slogan was raised suggested that the major problem was to overcome fratricidal conflict among the Indochinese workers states and the danger of Vietnamese domination over the Laotian and Kampuchean peoples.

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This framework was wrong. It was simply another way of saying that the real problem was Vietnamese "expansionism."

To the contrary, the central problem in Kampuchea at the present time is two-fold: 1. To crush the remnants of the reactionary Pol Pot forces. Rather than showing hostility to the Vietnamese forces, the Kampuchean masses have welcomed the aid and protection they received from Vietnam in the fight against Pol Pot. 2. To take steps to reorganize the Kampuchean economy and society through the establishment of a workers state.

The perspective of a socialist federation of Indochina makes political sense only within this framework.

3. Failure to correctly explain the conflicts.

All three statements maintain that the central responsibility for the conflicts lies with the bureaucracies of the workers states. The two main explanations for their actions are the Sino-Soviet dispute and nationalism.

a. The Sino-Soviet dispute.

The January 16, 1978, statement asserts that "the Sino-Soviet conflict has played a direct role in the deterioration of relations between Vietnam and Cambodia." Moscow is said to be acting out of "fear of the pro-Chinese sympathies of Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge." Beijing's goal was "to resist the spread of Vietnamese [and Soviet] influence in the area." Thus, "the Soviet and Chinese leaderships are both covering up for their 'ally' in the conflict between Vietnam and Cambodia. . . ."

The February 1, 1979, statement asserts that by its policies over the years, "the Soviet bureaucracy created the framework for the unfolding of the ensuing tragedy"; that "the Chinese bureaucracy in turn used its hegemony over the Cambodian CP leadership to whip up a systematic anti-Soviet and anti-Vietnamese campaign"; and that "the Vietnamese bureaucracy transformed the concept of [an Indochinese] federation into a formula scarcely hiding Vietnamese domination and control." "Under these circumstances," the statement continues, "it was inevitable that traditional Cambodian nationalist hostility to the Vietnamese would again unfold and give both the Chinese bureaucracy and its stooges in Phnompenh the necessary basis for their irresponsible campaigns against the Vietnamese workers state."

Although the statement asserts that "each of these bureaucracies" was acting "with arms in hand" in order "to defend its own immediate interests," it never explains what material interests were involved.

Both statements tend to present the conflicts as stemming from false ideas. The January 16, 1978, statement says: "Had the Stalinist ideology of 'socialism in one country' not triumphed, the sharpness of the confrontation between Vietnam and



Hungarians toss Stalin's portrait on bonfire in 1956.

Cambodia would be inconceivable." The February 1, 1979, statement says that the conflicts "represent the coming to maturity of the poisonous fruits of Stalin's theory of 'socialism in one country.'"

The February 21, 1979, statement on the China-Vietnam border war asserts that in addition to seeking capitalist stability in Southeast Asia, the Soviet bureaucracy seeks to "extend its own influence by capitalizing on its ties with the Vietnamese regime," while Beijing, on the other hand, considers the area "part of its sphere of influence."

In all these explanations, the central factors in the Sino-Soviet rivalry are omitted or their importance is rejected: the competition between the castes for relations with the imperialists and the attempt to defend their privileges in the area of consumption by trying to contain the class struggle and prevent the spread of revolutionary developments.

Rejecting these considerations, the February 1, 1979, statement says that Hanoi took an "irresponsible" action in Kampuchea and the February 21, 1979, statement says that Beijing was "showing its blindness" in invading Vietnam. In fact, however, both Hanoi and Beijing acted rationally from their own caste standpoints. Despite Hanoi's Stalinist methods, however, its action coincided with the interests of the Vietnamese and Kampuchean workers; Beijing's action, to the contrary, damaged the interests of the Chinese workers and the defense of their social gains.

Instead of seeing the bureaucratic castes as nonexpansionist by nature, the assumption is that workers states dominated by bureaucratic castes have a built-in drive towards war, based on trying to extend their spheres of influence. The February 21, 1979, statement says that "the infernal logic of interbureaucratic conflicts has prevailed." Even worse, it says, "the debacle suffered by the U.S. forces in Indochina, and the weakening of imperialism's position in Asia, have made it harder for

the imperialists to intervene directly, and have made it easier for conflicts between bureaucracies following an orientation of building 'socialism in one country' to take a military form."

If drawn out to its logical conclusions, this assessment would call into question the Trotskyist position rejecting the notion that the workers states, even bureaucratically degenerated or deformed, have no built-in drive toward war.

b. Nationalism.

Both the January 16, 1978, and the February 1, 1979, statements place strong emphasis on nationalism as a causal factor in the Vietnam-Kampuchea conflict. A virulent form of nationalism is ascribed not only to the regimes in Kampuchea and Vietnam, but to the masses as well. No distinction is made between the nationalism of the masses and the nationalism of the regimes. Nor is any distinction made between the nationalism of the bureaucratic caste in Vietnam and the nationalism of the capitalist Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea.

The January 16, 1978, statement says, "The weight of Stalinism internationally and the Stalinist training of the Vietnamese and Cambodian leaderships partly explain the extent of the resurgence of nationalism in Indochina."

The February 1, 1979, statement says that "Stalin's theory of 'socialism in one country'" led to "nationalism and nationalistic messianism getting the upper hand in bureaucratized communist parties."

While it is true that Stalinist castes conceive of and present their own interests in nationalist terms, this is not the fundamental cause of their actions. In defending their own *caste interests*, they falsely identify these interests with those of the nation as a whole. Their nationalism is but a guise for their interests as a parasitic caste. Capitalist regimes likewise identify their *class interests* with those of the nation as a whole. Here, too, it is necessary to delve below the ideology to expose the material class interests at work.

Hanoi was guided by the necessity of defending its caste interests in face of the growing imperialist pressure, in particular in face of the imperialist turn toward using the Pol Pot regime against the Vietnamese workers state. Thus Hanoi moved against the Pol Pot regime, while at the same time trying to keep the lid on struggles by the workers and peasants.

The capitalist Pol Pot regime, on the other hand, was guided by the necessity of defending its class interests against the threatened spread of the example of the Vietnamese socialist revolution.

Although both regimes resorted to chauvinistic appeals, their ideological views stemmed from different sources. Failure to distinguish the material roots of nationalism led the United Secretariat majority's statements into the trap of a

nonmaterialist explanation for the conflict.

The nationalism of the toiling masses is a different matter. Although the workers and peasants can be misled into following the chauvinistic ideologies of the respective governing regimes, this is not the only source for the nationalism of the masses. Often it reflects not a false ideology but a partial recognition of their real class interests. An example is the intense anti-imperialist nationalism of the workers and peasants of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea during the imperialist military interventions in Indochina. As an expression, albeit partial, of the real class interests of the workers and peasants, this nationalism was and remains progressive, advancing rather than hindering the development of proletarian internationalism.

It is false to speak, as the February 1, 1979, statement does, of a "traditional Cambodian nationalist hostility to the Vietnamese," as if this were a constant attribute of the consciousness of the masses. It is likewise false to assert, as the January 16, 1978, statement does, that there has been a "resurgence of nationalism in Indochina" and to imply that for the masses the "historic animosity [was] deliberately intensified by imperialism" and that their "outlook [was] molded by more than thirty years of long-isolated national liberation struggles."

On the contrary, the anti-imperialist nationalism of the masses that arose in response to the imperialists drew the Kampuchean and Vietnamese people closer together, not further apart.

Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Vietnamese action in Kampuchea provoked nationalist hostility among the Kampuchean masses. On the contrary, there is evidence that the Kampuchean masses supported the new turn of events and saw their own interests advanced as a result—a situation that is inexplicable in the framework given in the United Secretariat declarations.

It is also to be noted that the February 1 statement neglects to explain how the "resurgence of nationalism in Indochina" applies to Laos. Here, it seems, the "historic animosity" toward Vietnam has not been evident. But, then, the revolutionary process in Laos has been advancing, drawing Laos and Vietnam closer together.

It is true that as long as the Stalinists rule in Hanoi, the possibility of Vietnamese great-power domination exists. But it is false to say that this is an overriding problem in the eyes of the Laotian and Kampuchean masses today. In fact, to the degree that steps are taken to advance the socialist revolution in Kampuchea and to deepen the social revolution in Laos, this threat, as well as the power of the Vietnamese Stalinist caste, will diminish.

The United Secretariat's declarations are unable to explain the ideological processes because of their failure to distin-

guish correctly the social processes at work in Laos, Kampuchea, and Vietnam. As a result the line presented is false.

4. Failure to correctly assess the results of the conflicts.

This error flowed directly from the incorrect analysis and line of the three statements.

The January 16, 1978, statement asserted that a broader conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea "may deal a hard blow to the revolutionary struggles under way in Southeast Asia." The February 1, 1979, statement described the broader conflict that broke out as "disastrous." The exact opposite was the case.

The February 1, 1979, statement says, "The very interests of defending the Vietnamese workers state against imperialism make an immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese army from Cambodia absolutely imperative." In actuality, however, the withdrawal of the Vietnamese army from Kampuchea was precisely the objective that the imperialists aimed for in their drive against the Vietnamese workers state.

The February 1, 1979, statement asserts that the further presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea "will also strongly inflame Cambodian national feelings against foreign occupation and risk to trigger off long-term mass resistance—even in the form of prolonged guerrilla warfare—which under the present circumstances could make it easier for the Thai reactionary dictatorship and imperialism to prepare a comeback against the Vietnamese revolution for the first time since its crushing defeat in 1975."

In actuality, rightist guerrilla resistance has been going on, backed by the imperialists, and armed via Bangkok; the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese forces would make it easier, not more difficult, for the imperialists.

While it is true that the long-term presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea could spark mass hostility, this would occur only under conditions in which Hanoi was acting to prevent the masses of Kampuchea from asserting their independent interests. The imperialists would have nothing to gain from backing the independent struggles of Kampuchean workers and peasants against the Hanoi Stalinists.

Thus, all three statements draw conclusions that are the exact opposite of the real impact of the recent developments on the class struggle in Indochina.

5. Inability to counter the imperialist propaganda campaign and offer a clear alternative to the disorientation of the petty-bourgeois left.

The February 1 and February 21, 1979, statements correctly point out that the imperialists have seized on the developments in Indochina to wage an anticommunist propaganda campaign, and assert the need to combat it.

Very little is said, however, about the specific content of the imperialists' argu-

ments. This omission is glaring.

In fact, the line and analyses advanced in the February 1 and February 21 statements demand the immediate withdrawal of Vietnam from Kampuchea; reject demanding Soviet military aid to Vietnam; deemphasize the causal role of imperialism in the conflicts; and advance instead the view that the conflicts developed out of the Sino-Soviet dispute and the resurgence of nationalism. These positions could only disarm revolutionists in face of the arguments raised in the imperialist propaganda campaign.

The February 1, 1979, statement attacks "the attempts by international capital and by demoralized petty-bourgeois intellectuals to make a hue and cry over the 'Cambodian tragedy.'" Later on in the very same statement, however, the statement uses this very tone; it talks of "the unfolding of the ensuing tragedy" in Kampuchea, and calls it a "disaster." It was the opposite. It opened the possibility for a new advance of the Kampuchean revolution for the first time in three and a half years.

The lessons to be drawn from Vietnam's action in toppling the Pol Pot regime are compared with the lessons to be drawn at "the moment when Soviet tanks crushed the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968." But these were examples that illustrated Stalinism's crushing of the workers (which was favored by the imperialists). The toppling of the Pol Pot regime, on the other hand, was an advance for the workers (which was opposed by the imperialists).

From this standpoint, it was impossible for the February 1, 1979, statement to counteract what it recognizes as the "disorientation, cynicism, and demoralization in big sectors of the international working class and anti-imperialist fighters in the colonial and semicolonial countries."

It was untrue to assert that "Today, the huge fund of sympathy built up by the Indochinese revolution among the toilers of the world has been to a great extent jeopardized."

This was not the reaction of the toilers of the world. It was the reaction of many demoralized petty-bourgeois radicals, however. And, unfortunately, this failing spirit was not effectively countered in the statement of the USFI Bureau majority.

The incorrect line and hand-wringing tone of the statements released in the name of the United Secretariat contributed to disorienting many sections of the Fourth International. Many sections published positions in their press similar to those of the United Secretariat statements, and in some cases more extreme.

These errors must be rectified to prevent further political damage.

Only a thorough discussion can clarify the issues and open the door to reorienting the Fourth International along a correct axis in relation to the conflicts in Indochina and their implications for revolutionary Marxists.

May 12, 1979